

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

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SpongeBob SquarePants

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2004

GI pleads guilty in alleged mercy killing

16-year-old victim was severely wounded in Sadr City fighting

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Recognizing their sacrifice

Pentagon dinner honors troops on mend from wounds suffered in terror war Page 5



PHOTOS BY JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes

Above: Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz sat for dinner with wounded servicemembers Thursday night in the Pentagon. Dining with Wolfowitz is, at left, Army National Guard Capt. Troy O'Donley, commander of the 1544th Transportation Company based in Paris, Ill., and, at right, Guard 1st Lt. Ed Salas, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry, 30th Brigade in Lumberton, N.C. Right: Air Force Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, speaks with Spc. Chad Johnson of the Fort Hood, Texas-based 1st Cavalry Division. Johnson lost his leg in an improvised explosive device blast on Sept. 20 in Iraq. Top: World Wrestling Entertainment superstar Mick Foley, aka Mankind — who was a favorite of the troops at the dinner — poses with a dog tag touting the Pentagon's new "America Supports You" program.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

World

Berlusconi corruption trial: A Milan court acquitted Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi of corruption charges Friday — a major victory in the billionaire's decade-long battle with legal woes

that he has blamed on left-wing prosecutors.

More than 24 hours after the case went to the three-judge jury, the verdict was read to the court: acquittal on one count and a ruling that the statute of limitations had run out on the second corruption charge.

Throughout his trial, Berlusconi had maintained his innocence.



Berlusconi

Turkey's EU membership bid: Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's drive to get his country into the European Union won strong backing Friday from the EU's head office in Belgium a week before the bloc's leaders decide whether to open membership talks.

European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso will argue Turkey's case at the EU summit next Thursday and Friday, which must decide on opening negotiations, his spokeswoman said.

"The president supports the accession of Turkey to the Union," said spokeswoman Francine Le Bail. "He thinks that will be a good thing for Turkey and a good thing for the Union."

Meeting Erdogan at EU headquarters, Barroso told the Turkish leader he expected a "positive outcome" for Turkey at the summit, Le Bail said, adding that he also backed Turkey's call for a starting date early in 2005.

Ukraine election turmoil: Ukrainian opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko promised Friday to prosecute government officials and their supporters for crimes committed during the last decade should he win Ukraine's Dec. 26 rerun of the presidential election.

Yushchenko faces Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich in the repeat of the Nov. 21 vote. The Supreme Court threw out Yanukovich's victory in that runoff, saying it was invalidated by fraud.

Meanwhile, Yanukovich accused his rival of an unfair election campaign and said his camp would retaliate.

Looking tired and defensive, Yanukovich said Yushchenko's allies had tried to intimidate his supporters in western Ukraine, and that in reshuffling the Central Election Commission they left him without a single representative.

"The vote results won't be fair," Yanukovich said.

U.N. war crimes tribunal: A human rights group in Bosnia-Herzegovina said Friday that an offer by the Bosnian Serb government to pay special welfare benefits to war crimes suspects who surrender to the U.N. war crimes tribunal is immoral.

The government announced this week that fugitives who turn themselves in by Dec. 31 would qualify for monthly payments while they are on trial or serving prison terms, as well as their families.

Family members would also get two free trips a year to the Hague, Netherlands, where the court is based.

"It is absolutely scandalous and immoral that Serb authorities are using taxpayers' money to compensate their incompetence and inability to arrest war crimes suspects," said Branko Todorovic of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, a Vienna-based rights watchdog.

Oil-for-food scandal: U.N. diplomats say



Coast Guard rescue attempt: The wreckage of a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter was swept ashore on the eastern part of Skan Bay near Unalaska, Alaska, on Thursday. Frustrated by furious winds, mountainous seas and a mere five-hour window of December daylight, rescuers searched for six people lost in the Bering Sea after the helicopter that had plucked them from the crippled freighter Selendang Ayra crashed in the darkness. A major fuel spill from the grounded freighter threatens sensitive wildlife habitats in the Aleutian Islands, but finding the lost crewmembers remains a priority, officials said.

They are concerned that calls for Secretary-General Kofi Annan's resignation and allegations of widespread corruption in the U.N. oil-for-food program in Iraq could derail plans for a sweeping reform of the United Nations.

When a blue ribbon panel, after a year's work, released a report last week on how the world body should tackle war, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, poverty and other threats, the spotlight should have been on his 101 recommendations, officials say.

Instead, the report was eclipsed by headlines that Sen. Norm Coleman, a Minnesota Republican, was calling for Annan's resignation over the oil-for-food allegations.



Annan

States

Church abuse allegations: An association representing 75,000 Roman Catholic nuns has rejected a proposal from a victims advocacy group designed to encourage people who were sexually molested by nuns to come forward and get help.

The proposal was presented to officials of the Silver Spring, Md.-based Leadership Conference of Women Religious, an umbrella group of women's religious orders, by representatives of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests when the two sides met privately in Chicago on Oct. 3.

Conference officials responded to the requests in a Nov. 22 letter, saying the group's efforts had heightened "our awareness of the long-term effects of sexual misconduct by women religious." But, the officials wrote, they could not "meet their specific requests in the manner ... indicated."

Experimental flu vaccine: A European-produced flu vaccine widely used in other countries will be tested at four locations in the United States, the government announced.

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease is launching the trial in an effort to increase the supply of flu vaccine in this country.

The United States is millions of doses short on flu vaccine this year because of manufacturing problems at a major produc-

er of the vaccine.

NIAID said Thursday it hopes to enroll 1,000 healthy adults in the new tests by Dec. 23 in Rochester, N.Y., Cincinnati, Baltimore and Houston.

While more than 126 million doses of the test vaccine, Fluarix, have been distributed in more than 70 countries worldwide, Fluarix has never been tested or licensed for use in the United States. It is made by GlaxoSmithKline PLC's subsidiary GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals of Rixensart, Belgium.

Governor-newspaper conflict: Maryland Gov. Robert Ehrlich agreed to meet with editors of The (Baltimore) Sun, three weeks after he barred aides from talking to two of the newspaper's journalists, the Sun reported Friday.

The Republican governor and members of his communications staff will meet Dec. 17 in Annapolis with editor Timothy Franklin, publisher Denise Palmer, a Sun attorney and other editors, Franklin said. In an e-mail sent Nov. 18, Ehrlich's office barred spokespeople and executives in 19 state agencies from speaking with columnist Michael Olesker and State House bureau chief David Nitkin. Ehrlich accused the pair of "serial inaccuracies" in their work on how the administration was handling the sale of state-owned lands.

The newspaper then sued the governor in federal court, claiming a First Amendment violation. Franklin said he was happy Ehrlich agreed to the meeting but wished it had been arranged before the lawsuit.

War on terrorism

Stop-loss lawsuit: A soldier who lost his bid to stay in the United States while the Corps dealt with his suit challenging the extension of his re-enlistment is preparing to return to duty in Iraq, his lawyer says.

U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth in Washington declined to issue a temporary restraining order allowing Spc. David Qualls, 35, of Morrilton, Ark., to remain in the United States, where he is home on leave.

"He's going to obey orders and return to his unit," Qualls' attorney, Jeffery Fogel, said Thursday.

Qualls and seven other unnamed U.S. soldiers in Kuwait and Iraq filed a lawsuit Monday challenging the military's "stop loss" policy, which allows the extension of active-duty deployments during times of war or national emergencies.

Stories and photos from wire services

Gl pleads guilty to killing wounded Iraqi

By PAUL GARWOOD
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A U.S. soldier pleaded guilty at his court-martial Friday to killing a severely wounded 16-year-old Iraqi male during fierce fighting in Baghdad's impoverished Sadr City neighborhood, the military said.

Staff Sgt. Johnny M. Horne Jr., 36, of Winston-Salem, N.C., was among several soldiers who had found the wounded teenager on Aug. 18 in a burning truck with severe abdominal wounds sustained during the clashes. A criminal investigator had said during an earlier hearing that the soldiers decided to kill him to "put him out of his misery."

City was the scene of wild clashes earlier this year between

coalition forces and Shiite rebels al-Qaeda cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, a loud opponent of the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq.

In a plea bargain, Horne, a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, from Fort Riley, Kan., pleaded guilty to one count of unpremeditated murder and one count of soliciting another soldier to commit unpremeditated murder, charges he faces under Articles 118 and 81 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

"The convictions stemmed from Staff Sgt. Horne's murder of a severely wounded Iraqi civilian in Baghdad's Sadr City district," a military statement said.

Lt. Col. James Hutton, a military spokesman, said Horne had originally been charged with the

more serious offenses of premeditated murder, conspiracy to commit premeditated murder and solicitation of another soldier to commit premeditated murder.

"He decided to plead guilty to the lesser charges presented to him," Hutton said.

Hutton said Horne was expected to be sentenced later Friday.

Horne is one of six Fort Riley soldiers charged with killings in recent months — two for killings in Kansas and four for deaths in Iraq. Staff Sgt. Cardenas J. Alban, 29, of Inglewood, Calif., was charged along with Horne in the teenager's killing and is awaiting a court-martial hearing.

Previous military court hearings have heard that several troops had fired on a group of Iraqi men placing homemade

bombs along a road in Sadr City. Soldiers from the same battalion arrived on the scene to find a burning truck and casualties around it.

According to accounts given by witnesses at previous hearings, the soldiers, including Horne, tried to rescue an Iraqi casualty from inside the vehicle. The victim had severe abdominal wounds and burns and was thought by several of the witnesses to be beyond medical help.

The criminal investigator had said that the U.S. soldiers had decided that "the best course of action was to put [the victim] out of his misery."

Another military hearing into a soldier charged with killing another Iraqi in a separate August incident in Sadr City is expected to continue Friday.

Sgt. Michael P. Williams, 25, of Memphis, Tenn., faced the opening day of an Article 32 hearing Thursday charged with premeditated murder, obstruction of justice and making a false official statement.

Two witnesses gave evidence during the Article 32 hearing, which is the military equivalent of a grand jury hearing.

Williams was in the same case along with Spc. Brent May, 22, of Salem, Ohio, who faced a two-day hearing this week and is awaiting a ruling on whether he was a court-martialed, receive a lesser penalty or be acquitted.

Six members of his unit, Company C, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, from Fort Riley, testified in his case.

Officials: Military working to upgrade vehicles' armor

By JOHN J. LUMPKIN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Military officials said they were working hard to upgrade the armor on Army vehicles in Iraq, a day after a soldier had pressed Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld on the subject. President Bush said, "The concerns expressed are being addressed."

Close to three-quarters of the Humvees in the Iraq war theater now have upgraded armor protection, but many larger trucks and tractor-trailer rigs do not, according to congressional figures.

Military officials said that armoring Humvees has been the top priority because they are used to patrol areas where attacks are likely. The heavy haulers, meanwhile, usually travel convoy routes that are more frequently swept for guerrillas and bombs.

The issue of whether the military is providing enough protection to soldiers is receiving new attention after a National Guardsman on his way to Iraq questioned Rumsfeld on Wednesday as to why he and his comrades had to scrounge through scrap piles to protect their vehicles.

Lt. Gen. Steven R. Whitcomb, commander of the 3rd Army, was questioned about that by Pentagon reporters Thursday in a teleconference from Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

"If I can add another plate or another inch or more to the vehicle I'm riding in that gives me protection, it's better," he said. "So I think that's a prudent thing to do, if the soldier has the capability. ... In my opinion, it's not being done in mass numbers or mass quantities."

He said vehicles with upgraded armor were being added every day.

"Our goal, and what we're working toward, is that no wheeled vehicle that leaves Kuwait going into Iraq is driven by a soldier that does not have some level of armor protection on it," he said.

At the White House in Washington, Bush, too, was asked about the situation.

"The concerns expressed are being addressed and that is — we expect our troops to have the best possible equipment," Bush said.

Democrats have more questions for Rumsfeld. Sen. Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat, said he would put his in a letter demanding increased production of armor kits and an explanation for why soldiers are searching for scrap metal in landfills.

"This administration has received every dollar they have asked for from Congress, and oftentimes more," Durbin said Thursday in his Chicago office. "So, the money has been there."

Questions have been raised about why the military had not started armoring its vehicles sooner than August 2003, when insurgents turned to bombs to attack U.S. forces. Some critics point to the lack of light armored vehicles as further evidence the Bush administration was unprepared for the kind of insurgency it has faced in Iraq.

As to the issue of soldiers turning to scrap piles to better protect their vehicles, senior military officials have offered a few explanations. One is that units heading into Iraq are allowed to scavenge outgoing and damaged vehicles for spare armor plates.

In addition, officials acknowledge, soldiers will sometimes come up with ways to better protect themselves, and perform extra modifications to their vehicles. This may be a spare armor plate or sandbags on the floor, or some other fix.

Stories differ on whether armoring was increased

By HELEN KENNEDY
New York Daily News

NEW YORK — As the uproar over unprotected Humvees grew, President Bush tried to assure worried soldiers that their safety is a top concern, the manufacturer of armor plating said he had not been asked to increase production.

"I have told many families I've met with we're doing everything we possibly can to protect your loved ones," Bush said. "They deserve the best."

He said concerns raised by troops in Kuwait to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld on Wednesday "are being addressed."

Lt. Col. Joseph Yoswa, US Army spokesman, said, "We are looking into the announcement. We are continuing efforts outlined yesterday to provide safe vehicles for our troops in the Global War on Terror. We are making no commitment at this time in regards to any new contracts, but our goal is to keep those vehicles and our troops safe."

But Florida-based Armor Holdings says the company advised the

Army last month that it could increase output by as much as 22 percent per month but never heard back.

Robert McCreedy, president of the company's armor and defense group, said that the company easily could boost the number of armored trucks it turns out from \$30 a month to \$30 a month. "We're prepared to build 50 to 100 vehicles more per month," McCreedy told Bloomberg News. "I stand ready to do that."

Democrats accused the administration of lying to the troops. "Even more outrageous than sending soldiers into combat without the proper protective equipment is offering them false excuses," said Rep. Marty Meehan, D-Mass.

"President Bush should dismiss [Rumsfeld] immediately."

Some lawmakers said that the problem is not turning out new armored vehicles but getting armor to the unprotected Humvees that already are in Iraq.

Rumsfeld said many vehicles "don't need armor because they are going to be in a compound, stationary, or fully protected."

Stripes reporter Leo Shane III contributed to this report from the Pentagon.



STEVE LIEWER/Stars and Stripes

Sgt. Orville Whitlock, 30, of Lynchburg, Va., explains how a rocket-propelled grenade hit his Company B, 9th Engineer Battalion Humvee during a patrol May 5. Whitlock and four other soldiers received shrapnel wounds — which he said "feels like someone sliced open your back and poured in hot chicken grease," but all survived.

Paper regrets readers not told up front of reporter's role in story

The Associated Press

CHATTANOOGA, Tennessee — Readers should have been told promptly that an embedded reporter was behind the frame a question that a serviceman asked of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld this week in Kuwait, the reporter's publisher says.

The question to Rumsfeld from Spc. Thomas "Jerry" Wilson, 31, of Nashville, complaining that many military vehicles in Iraq are not adequately armored, has touched off a storm of new publicity about the issue.

"In hindsight, information on how the question was framed should have been included in Thursday's story in the Times Free Press. It was not," the paper's publisher and executive editor, Tom Griscam, said in a note to readers published Friday.

Military affairs reporter Edward Lee Pitts, who is embedded with the 278th Regimental Combat Team, said he worked with guardsmen after being told reporters would not be allowed to ask Rumsfeld any questions. Pitts had sent an e-mail to co-workers back in Tennessee on Wednesday outlining his role.

The question from Wilson appeared to surprise Rumsfeld on Wednesday and prompted cheers among the soldiers.

Airmen morph into new Iraq combat roles

BY RON JENSEN
Stars and Stripes

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq — Hours before dawn recently, Airman 1st Class Brandon Young was cleaning and maintaining an MK-19, which can fire 40 mm grenades at a rapid pace.

"Before we go out on a mission, we check them out and make sure they're clean," he said. "If they're not clean, they won't fire. If you can't fire, that can be a very bad thing," Young said.

Young and his MK-19 were about to leave the base and provide security for a convoy traveling the dangerous roads of Iraq. So how exactly did a guy who normally drives distinguished vehicles around Scott Air Force Base, Ill., find himself doing this?

"I have no idea," Young said without looking up from his task. "I went to work one day, and they said, 'Hey, you're getting deployed, and you'll be on a gun truck.'"

For nearly a year now, airmen who normally do such tasks as drive shuttle buses or act as chauffeurs for generals and politicians have been battling bad guys with crew-served weapons in support of convoys.

In that time, they have covered more than 1 million miles of Iraqi roads. One airman has been killed in the line of duty and more than 50 have been wounded.

Lt. Col. Sal Nodjoman, deputy commander of the 732 Expeditionary Mission Support Group in Balad, explained that the job changes came up about a year ago at an all-services conference where resources was the main topic. "The Army recognized that they were lacking some capabilities when it came to convoy support," he said. "The Air Force volunteered to help the Army out."

Under the initial plan, the airmen would simply drive the supply trucks, Nodjoman said, which is why transporters like Young were picked. Later, the job expanded to driving the gun trucks, as well. "That further morphed into not just driving [the gun trucks], but being the guys who sit in the back," he said.

That meant they'd handle not only the MK19, but other weapons, such as the M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon and the M-240B light machine gun, weapons not ordinarily required for bus driving duties.

The airmen — Nodjoman refers to them as combat airmen — receive four weeks of training

With too few GIs for convoy security, AF 'volunteered to help the Army out'



PHOTOS BY RON JENSEN/Stars and Stripes

Above: Combat airmen at Balad Air Base, Iraq, work in the pre-dawn hours to prepare their armored Humvees for duty as security for a convoy from the base. Combat airmen have been trained for the job of convoy security to help supplement Army security troops.

Top right: Airman 1st Class Randy Calip holds a flashlight in his mouth so he can secure a machine gun atop a Humvee.

Right: Airman 1st Class Brandon Young cleans an MK-19 grenade launcher prior to a convoy in which he will provide security.

near Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, in such areas as combat life-saving, use of the weapons and land navigation. That's augmented by four more weeks in Kuwait on the firing range, learning among other things, close-quarters combat and how to fire from a moving vehicle.

Tech. Sgt. Rob McMillan, also from Scott Air Force Base and a truck master with Detachment 2632 at Balad, said attacks are always a threat. "It's common. Not every day," he said. "We're used to it."

"It's a constant source of concern," Nodjoman said. "It's part of our daily business." When he first arrived, he said, "I would sit here with my mouth open at the number of incidents involving our people."

In Young's time, he has seen roadside bombs explode and rocket-propelled grenades shoot past. "I've seen tracer rounds go by," he said.

"I hope this opens everybody's eyes that we do more than drive air crews around."

Staff Sgt. Reuben Rangel
Vehicle operator at
Ramstein Air Base, Germany

works vehicle operations at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, recalled a mortar round landing 30 yards from his truck on one mission. He said, "It's scary, but we use it to our advantage. It keeps us on our toes."

Besides the detachment at Balad, the squadron has convoy security detachments at Forward

Operating Base Speicher at Tikrit and Logistics Support Area Diarmundbach at Mosul.

At least some combat airmen are on the road every day. They may have a short mission and return in a few hours, or they may be gone for a few days, traveling to a few bases before returning to home.

Nodjoman said the Air Force recognizes the combat airmen are experiencing something unusual in the flying service. "We're not known for going forward into the hostile area to work on the ground," he said.

The service will now provide "decompression time" at Lackland for combat airmen once they return to the United States, Nodjoman said. "It's still in the works," he said, but it will be several days in which the troops can talk to chaplains, family counselors and others who can help them readjust to their routines on the home front.

Because so few have the training, the combat airmen are de-

ployed for six months instead of the normal Air Force rotation of four.

Rangel said the effort might shine a different light on the airmen who drive the shuttle buses around bases back home.

"I'm hoping it brings a lot more respect to our group," he said. "I hope this opens everybody's eyes that we do more than drive air crews around."

In fact, it has changed the perspective of the airmen who drive the buses, now that they've had a taste of combat.

"I'd rather be doing this," King said.

Young, however, had a different take. "Asked if he would find shutting distinguished visitors around his base in Illinois a bit boring after this experience, he said, 'Actually, I won't have a problem with it at all.'"

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So far, Halliburton has earned \$10 billion from Iraq contracts

BY MATT KELLEY
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The largest U.S. contractor in Iraq, Halliburton Co., has passed the \$10 billion mark in work orders from the Army for services supporting troops and rebuilding the country's oil industry.

The Army has ordered \$8.3 billion worth of work from Halliburton under a contract to support soldiers with meals, housing, laundry and other services. Halliburton got \$2.5 billion more in work from the Army Corps of

Engineers to put out oil well fires and shore up Iraq's dilapidated oil infrastructure.

Allegations of financial misdeeds, including corruption and overcharging, have led to criminal, congressional and Pentagon investigations of Halliburton's work in Iraq.

Congressional critics say the Bush administration is going easy on the oil services company, which Vice President Dick Cheney ran from 1995 to 2000. Cheney and Halliburton deny any preferential treatment.

Rep. Henry Waxman of California, the top

Democrat on the House Government Reform Committee, has been one of the main congressional critics of Halliburton. Waxman issued a statement Thursday criticizing the Army's decision not to withhold partial payments to Halliburton while some accounting issues are straightened out. "The mounting value of the contracts has been accompanied by a growing list of concerns about Halliburton's performance," the statement said.

Halliburton spokeswoman Wendy Hall said the company has done a good job serv-

ing troops and helping to rebuild Iraq. "This latest statement is simply recycling old, unfounded allegations in an effort to discredit a company that is providing much-needed services in support of our troops," Hall said.

The investigations of Halliburton's work in Iraq include a criminal investigation into whether kickbacks were involved in Halliburton's use of a Kuwaiti subcontractor to provide gasoline for Iraq's civilian market. Halliburton says it notified federal authorities after an internal probe found two of its former employees may have been involved in corruption worth \$6.3 million.



PHOTOS BY JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes

Above: Three-year-old Amnysia Lane and her mom, Army Spc. Goldie Staley, pose with WWE wrestler Mick Foley, aka Mankind, at a dinner at the Pentagon held for servicemembers being treated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington and National Naval Medical Center in nearby Bethesda, Md. Staley, of the 2nd Infantry Division at Camp Casey in South Korea, injured her back and was treated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Right: Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, chats with Army Reserve Sgt. Paul Shelmerdine, left, and Spc. Arthur McLin before the dinner. Shelmerdine and McLin were injured by improvised explosive devices while serving in Iraq.



Pentagon recognizes wounded troops

Military officials host dinner for those injured in global terror war

BY PATRICK DICKSON

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Spc. Arthur McLin walked into the Pentagon's Eisenhower corridor and saw a familiar face.

"I remember you," he said to Sgt. Paul Shelmerdine.

The two sized up each other's injuries and gingerly shook hands.

"Therapy," said Shelmerdine.

McLin, of the National Guard's 2101 Transportation Company 3rd Platoon out of Aliceville, Alabama, and Shelmerdine, the Army Reserve's 369th Transportation Company, based in Wichita, Kansas, were two of 170 guests from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington and the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., honored Thursday evening with a dinner for those injured in the global war on terror.

The troops were welcomed by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Mrs. Donald Rumsfeld and a host of general officers and their wives. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld could not attend because he was flying back from his visit with troops in Kuwait, among other places.

Wolfowitz told those gathered



Myers talks with Army Cpl. Roberto Santiago of the 1st Armored Division, 1st Brigade, based at Friedberg, Germany. Santiago and his family, including 5-year-old daughter Mariah at left, were among those honored with a dinner at the Pentagon Thursday evening.

about troops fighting in the Battle of the Bulge, the seemingly insurmountable odds against them and the casualties they suffered.

"You've probably heard all the accolades," Wolfowitz said. "They're called the Greatest Generation, and deserve to be called that. But you here, and the men and women in uniform on the front lines in Afghanistan and Iraq, are every bit as brave and courageous and dedicated to this country."

One of the highlights of the evening was World Wrestling Entertainment superstar Mick Foley, aka Mankind, who ate with the troops and agreed to countless requests from servicemembers and families for a photo.

Foley, who regularly visits the wounded, spoke before the meal about his work with the Defense Department's America Supports You program and how humbling his visits have been.

"My first few visits, I thought

"My first few visits [with the wounded], I thought they were ... just trying to impress me, but it turns out they're not. They just have a love for their country — devotion to it — that guys like me sitting on the sidelines can't really understand."

Mick Foley, aka Mankind
WWE wrestler

they were ... just trying to impress me, but it turns out they're not. They just have a love for their country — devotion to it — that guys like me sitting on the sidelines can't really understand."

The America Supports You program provides an easy way of letting the servicemembers know the folks at home are behind them.

But the stars of the evening, as all the speakers said, were the troops.

As they mingled and talked about their experiences, they wanted their compatriots still in the fight to know they are OK, and to be safe.

Cpl. Roberto Santiago of the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, based at Friedberg, Germany, talking about his friends Spcs. De Camps and Gregory, perhaps summed up the experience of camaraderie in war best.

"Those guys kept me alive over there. When one of us was down, the other two would get him up and keep him going."

Santiago was badly injured in May when he took shrapnel from an RPG in the spine in Karbala. He walks with crutches now, but says the prognosis is good for him to walk unaided soon.

Now that he's recovering, he has a different support team.

"I give all the credit to my wife, Tina — she takes care of me and our three kids. I don't know how she does it."

McLin, injured when an improvised explosive device was set off as his convoy passed, wanted his friends in the 3rd Platoon to know he was thinking of them.

"My battle buddy, Staff Sgt. Ida Prude, my other friend Sgt. Jonnie Dover, Staff Sgt. Ike Gipson ... um, Bradford, Mitchell, Ellis, Matthews ... gotta say hello!"

He was looking forward to 30 days' leave for Christmas at home in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

"I guess once I go back home and step on that ground, I think all the fears and worries that I've had in Iraq will finally fall off, because I'll know I'm safe now."

E-mail Patrick Dickson at: dicksonp@stripes.osd.mil

Iran-linked cleric top Iraq candidate

By NICK WADHAMS

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A cleric with links to Iran leads the candidate list of a powerful coalition of Iraq's mainstream Shiite Muslim groups for next month's election, an aide said Friday. The list also includes former Pentagon favorite Ahmad Chalabi and some followers of radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

Abdel-Aziz al-Hakim — the head of Iraq's largest Shiite party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution — would stand to take a central position in the assembly that will create Iraq's next government and constitution, if the parliament takes most of the coalition seats in the Jan. 30 vote.

In a troubling sign, masked gunmen riding in a black BMW killed three members of Iraq's Hezbollah Shiite movement, one of the 25 groups in the coalition, said Essa Sayid Jafer, director of the group's political office.

Jafer said one of the three victims, Sattar Jabar, was on the candidate list and had been warned he would be killed unless he bowed out.

"Sattar Jabar received a threatening letter two days before the assassination," Jafer said. "The letter mentioned that if you are nominated, you will be killed, but he did not give the threat any attention."

Backed by Iraq's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the coalition — called the United Iraqi Alliance — hopes to draw the bulk of the vote from Iraq's Shiite majority.

U.S.-backed interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, also a Shiite, has not joined the group and is drawing up his own candidate list. The coalition's platform, which has not been finished, will include a call for working toward the withdrawal of foreign troops in Iraq, members said.

"There must be a timetable for this," said Hussein al-Mousawi,



Iraqis carry a portrait of Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr in Baghdad's Shiite enclave of Sadr City on Friday, as they mark the anniversary of his father's death. Mohammed Sadr al-Sadr was killed in 1999 by Saddam Hussein's regime.

an official of the Shiite Political Council, an umbrella group that has some parties represented in the alliance.

For now, troops are arriving in greater numbers, part of a U.S. plan to bolster security ahead of elections. In the southern city of Basra, Iraqi security officials reported that American soldiers ordered to Iraq had crossed the border with Kuwait on Friday. The Shiite coalition's list of 228 candidates was created under the guidance of al-Sistani, Iraq's most influential Shiite cleric.

He has been working to unite Shiites to ensure victory and include representatives from Iraq's other diverse communities. Shiites make up 60 percent of Iraq's nearly 26 million people.

The list's completion puts the focus squarely on Iraq's Sunni Arab groups, who must decide whether to continue seeking a postponement of the vote, boycott it, or join the race.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Thursday, at least 1,281 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,003 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include those in military custody.

The AP count is three higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Thursday.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,143 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 894

deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Army Sgt. 1st Class Todd C. Gibbs, 37, Angeleno, Texas, died Tuesday in Khadidya, Iraq, while on an explosive hit a dismounted patrol, assigned to 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 2d Infantry Division, Camp Greaves, Korea.

■ Army Capt. Mark N. Stubenhofer, 30, Springfield, Va., died Tuesday in Baghdad, Iraq, when his unit was attacked by small arms fire, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division, Fort Riley, Kan.

Mosul copter crash kills 2

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A helicopter accident at an air base in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul killed two U.S. soldiers and injured four, the military said Friday.

The crash occurred when an AH-64 Apache helicopter hit a UH-60 Black Hawk that was on the ground, U.S. military spokesman Lt. Col. Paul Hastings said. The accident is under investigation and the cause had not been determined, he said.

The four injured soldiers have returned to duty. The two soldiers who died were all from Task Force Olympia, whose headquarters are in Mosul.

The names of the soldiers who died were being withheld until their families are notified.

Tropical marathon in Afghanistan

HONOLULU — Come Sunday, some 300 American soldiers in Afghanistan will run their very own Honolulu Marathon.

The servicemen and women will do 26.2 miles on the same day as their civilian counterparts in the Aloha State, making nearly six laps around the airtight at Firebase Ripley just outside Tarin Kowt in the central province of Uruzgan, a former Taliban stronghold and a possible hiding place of Osama bin Laden.

Runners need a foxhole here and there for cover in case of a rocket or mortar attack. Fellow soldiers in full gear will be standing by with armored Humvees.

From The Associated Press

Reservist's AWOL case to proceed

By LYNNE DUKE

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — An Army reservist who checked himself into a civilian psychiatric hospital after being turned away from a military clinic should be court-martialed for being absent without leave, according to an Army report.

First Lt. Julian P. Goodrum, of Knoxville, Tenn., is a veteran of both U.S. wars in Iraq and is being treated for post-traumatic stress disorder at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Goodrum was suffering from the disorder last fall, the time of his alleged infraction. "Lt. Goodrum had been diagnosed with PTSD, though this should not be reason to not pursue court-martial action," states the report by Army Lt. Col. Michael Amaral, the investigating officer in the case.

Goodrum's legal team, which released the report to The Washington Post, intends to fight the recommendation. The Post wrote about Goodrum and his case in its Style section last month.

"The diagnosis of PTSD is at the very heart of the case, and for that diagnosis to receive a single line in this investigating officer's report just goes to show how little attention has been given by the military to this case and the real issues in it," said Matthew MacLean, of the law firm Shaw Pittman.

Goodrum, 34, is a 16-year military man who has served in the Navy, Tennessee Na-

tional Guard and Army Reserve. He served in Iraq last year as a platoon leader in the 212th Transportation Company. His deployment was cut short after three months by an extreme case of carpal tunnel syndrome. Shortly after his return to his base at Fort Knox, Ky., symptoms of his post-traumatic stress disorder emerged, culminating in a mental breakdown the day he was turned away from a base clinic.

Following an investigative hearing at Walter Reed on Oct. 25, Amaral recommended in his Nov. 5 report that Goodrum be court-martialed for being AWOL while in the civilian psychiatric facility, for failing to obey an order that he return to Fort Knox or follow the necessary medical leave procedures; and for fraternizing with a female sergeant while in Iraq. Goodrum faces up to six years in prison and the equivalent of a dishonorable discharge from the military.

He and his lawyers deny that he was ordered to return to Fort Knox, citing testimony from his senior officer, Capt. Debra Savage. "I did not order First Lt. Goodrum to come back. I gave him two alternatives," the Amaral report quotes Savage as saying. Goodrum, a decorated soldier with glowing military performance reviews, yielded at the Amaral report.

"He never mentioned my outstanding service and he mentioned PTSD like it was a chewing gum wrapper," he said, calling himself "highly disgusted with the [Army] medical system."

Hassoun

Marine who went missing in Iraq charged with desertion

By ESTES THOMPSON

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — A Marine who claimed he was abducted by anti-coalition forces after he went missing from his unit in Iraq has been charged with desertion.

The charges filed Thursday against Capt. Wassel Ali Hassoun followed a five-month investigation into his June disappearance from a U.S. military camp near Fallujah, Iraq, according to a statement from the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade at Camp Lejeune.

Hassoun, of West Jordan, Utah, is accused of taking unauthorized leave from the unit where he served as an Arabic interpreter.

Hassoun also is charged with loss of government property and theft of a military firearm for allegedly leaving the Marine camp in Iraq with a 9 mm service pistol, as well as theft and wrongful appropriation of a government vehicle.

Neither Hassoun nor his lawyer planned to make any public statement about the charges, brigade spokesman Maj. Matt Morgan said. Hassoun's family in Utah did not answer their phone Thursday.

No date has been set for an Article 32 hearing, one of the first steps toward a possible court-martial, Morgan said.

Hassoun is not in custody or confined to Camp Lejeune; he is working in the brigade motor pool. Morgan said he will continue to go about his normal duties, although he is considered to be non-operational until the charges are resolved.

The desertion count carries a five-year maximum prison sentence and the other counts carry 10-year maximums. If convicted, Hassoun also could be dishonorably discharged and ordered to forfeit his pay and allowances.

Hassoun was last seen in Iraq on June 19. He did not report for duty the next day and was listed as missing.

On June 27, the Arabic news network Al-Jazeera broadcast the photo of Hassoun looking as if he was a hostage, blindfolded and wearing a hood. A group called the National Islamic Resistance/1920 Revolution Brigade claimed to be holding him and threatening to decapitate him unless detainees in U.S.-led occupation prisons were released, Al-Jazeera said.

Hassoun contacted American officials in Beirut, Lebanon, on July 8, and he was taken to the American Embassy there.

Navy tests new uniforms for lower enlisted

BY SCOTT SCHONAUER

Stars and Stripes

NAVAL STATION ROTAS, Spain — The Navy is trying out new service uniform styles for lower enlisted sailors that are designed to be more comfortable and worn year round.

The plan is to find one uniform to replace the summer white, winter blue and tropical uniforms.

The Navy unveiled the new designs Wednesday at the Naval Medical Center in San Diego. Service uniforms are typically worn at office work spaces at shore bases and commands.

The concepts come in two types: gray or khaki shirts with Navy blue pants or skirts. The prototype with the gray shirt and blue slacks looks slightly like the Air Force's service uniform. The khaki version looks a lot like the Marine Corps uniform.

The new designs attracted mixed reviews from sailors.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Lenore Gregory, a storekeeper at Naval Station Rota, likes having a year-round uniform but thought the khaki style looked too much like the officer or chief petty officer uniform.

"Oh, my goodness," she said, when she saw the khaki version in a picture. "That's disgusting. That's not good at all. We know by the collar devices and the uni-

forms who's a chief and who's not a chief. That kind of separated us. ... They couldn't be 'khakis' any more because there's no distinction."

Petty Officer 2nd Class Angel Ortiz, a reservist with the base security department, also preferred the gray shirt and Navy slacks.

"They're going to say you're a chief or an officer," Ortiz said of the khaki shirt. "But they do look better."

About 550 sailors at commands across the globe will test-wear the uniforms this winter. Overseas locations include Naples, Italy, and Yokosuka, Japan.

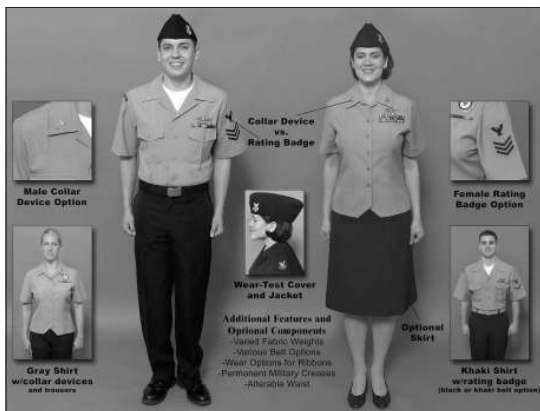
The prototypes include several options, including sewn-in creases versus pressed creases, and two styles of garrison caps.

For females, the pants and the skirts do not need a belt. The blouse for the females is meant to be untucked and extend over the top of the slacks.

Both shirts will be tested in wool or polyester fabrics for comfort.

After the six-month testing phase, the Navy will collect fleet-wide surveys and hand them to the chief of naval operations. If he decides to change the uniform, the Navy will begin phasing in the new uniform within 18 to 24 months.

A Navy task force conducted more than 40,000 surveys to find



out what types of styles sailors would like and what changes they would like to see made to the current uniforms. The group came up with the designs based on that

input. Surveys found that lower-ranking sailors, those in pay rates E-6 and below, were the least satisfied with their uniforms. They es-

pecially disliked the summer white uniforms because they got so dirty, the Navy said.

E-mail Scott Schonauer at: schonauers@mail.estripes.osd.mil

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IN THE STATES

Agency seeks recall

WASHINGTON — Federal safety regulators want 600,000 Dodge Durangos and Dakota trucks recalled because their wheels could fall off, but the auto maker doesn't believe the defect is dangerous, a company spokesman said.

Federal safety regulators have asked DaimlerChrysler AG to recall certain Durango sport utility vehicles and Dakota pickups from the 2000 to 2003 model years, Chrysler spokesman Max Gates confirmed. He stressed the models haven't been recalled.

Gang leader detained

MIAMI — A street gang leader who joined demobilized soldiers in a rebellion that forced Haiti's President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to flee the country has been arrested in Miami, officials said Friday. Butcher Metayer was taken into custody by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and "is currently going through proceedings and his case is active in litigation," spokeswoman Nina Pruneda said.

Metayer's family told The Miami Herald on Thursday that he arrived at Miami International Airport from Haiti on Nov. 28 for treatment of stomach pains and to see his mother.

Serial killer sentenced

BATON ROUGE, La. — Twice-convicted murderer Derrick Todd Lee already was spending his time on death row at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, but he formally received his death sentence Friday after the beating and stabbing death of a 22-year-old woman.

Before he was sentenced to the penalty decided by a jury October, the mother and sister of victim Charlotte Murray Pace spoke to him, with Pace's sister Sam describing how he would be put to death by lethal injection.

From The Associated Press

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Terms of the CRESCENT MOON

Myra Moore Grant Moore

With *Tactics of the Crescent Moon*, U.S. forces could turn the tide in Iraq. From the author of *The Last Hundred Hours*, it contains a detailed description of militant Muslim small-unit maneuvers and how to counter them. Mail Gen. Ray L. "E-Toot" Smith USMC (Ret.) writes the foreword. Send \$14.95 plus \$4.00 shipping to Postery Press, P.O. Box 5360, Emerald Isle, NC 28594, use your credit card 1-800-505-4334 or posterypress.org. P.M.G. get thru PMG.



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Shooter obsessed with Panthera

BY ANITA CHANG
The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The man who shot former Panthera guitarist "Dimebag" Darrell Abbott and three other men to death at a nightclub was obsessed with the popular heavy metal band and made bizarre accusations against it, a one-time friend said in reports published Friday.

Jeremie Brey said gunman Nathan Gale once showed up at a friend's house saying he wanted to share songs he had written. The pages of lyrics were copied from Panthera, but Gale claimed he had written them, Brey said.

"He was off his rocker," Brey told The Columbus Dispatch. "He said they were his songs, that Panthera stole them from him and that he was going to sue them."

He later told Brey that he planned to sue Panthera for stealing his identity. Brey and friend Dave Johnson said Gale's behavior frightened them and they distanced themselves from him several years ago. But other friends said they never considered Gale capable of violence.

On Wednesday night, the 25-year-old former Marine charged the stage at a show. Abbott's new band, Damageplan, and gunned down four people, including Abbott, before a policeman fatally shot him.

Police said Friday they still



Fans and friends of Damageplan guitarist "Dimebag" Darrell Abbott — including, from left, Tom Webber of Davison, Mich., and Leer Snapir and Jeff Cooch, both of Ann Arbor, Mich. — hold a vigil outside The Machine Shop nightclub in Flint, Mich., on Thursday, where Abbott and band were to have played. Abbott and three others were killed when a lone gunman charged the stage and opened fire Wednesday.

didn't know Gale's motive, and they may never find out. Some witnesses said Gale yelled accusations that the revered guitarist broke up Panthera, but police had not verified those reports.

An imposing figure at 6-foot-3, Gale had made people uneasy even at the tattoo parlor, staring

and locking them into conversations about heavy metal music. When he played offensive line for the semi-professional Lima Thunder football team, he psyched himself up before games by piping Panthera into his headphones, coach Mark Green said.

But Green had not pegged Gale

as the type to go on a shooting rampage.

"It wasn't like he was a loner," Green said.

Gale had minor run-ins with police since 1997 but wasn't considered a troublemaker, according to police in his hometown of Marysville, 25 miles northwest of Columbus.

Gale had served with the 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina until November 2003, when he was discharged after less than half of the typical four-year stint, Marine spokeswoman Gurney Sgt. Kristine Scarber said. She declined to explain the discharge, citing privacy rules.

A few hours before the shooting, Gale had showed up at Marysville's Bears Den Tattoo Studio, where often he stared at people and forced them into conversations, manager Lucas Bender said.

On Wednesday, he asked about having the studio order tattoo equipment for him, tattoo artist Bo Toler said. Toler told him no, and Gale got angry and started yelling, he said.

"Last night was actually the first time I noticed his temper," Toler said.

No one answered the door Thursday at the Marysville home of Gale's mother, Mary Clark. A message left on her cell phone was not returned.

President names secretary of energy

BY TERENCE HUNT
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President George Bush on Friday named Treasury deputy secretary Samuel Bodman as secretary of the Energy Department, filling one of the last openings in his second-term Cabinet.

Bodman "has shown himself to be a problem solver who knows how to set goals and knows how to reach them," Bush said at an announcement ceremony in the Roosevelt Room.

If confirmed by the Senate, Bodman's major challenge will be to get Congress to enact energy legislation, including one of the president's longtime goal of opening an Arctic wildlife refuge in Alaska to oil drilling.

Bush said his priorities for the department are to "develop and deploy the latest technology to provide a new generation of cleaner and

more efficient energy sources" and to "promote strong conservation measures."



Bodman

"We will bring greater certainty of cost and supply and that certainty is essential to economic growth and job creation."

He pledged to renew his push for legislation codifying the energy plan he unveiled 3½ years ago, stymied by lawmakers despite Republican domination of Congress.

Bodman also will have to find a way to untangle both legal and budget problems that have threatened progress on getting a nuclear waste dump built in Nevada.

Congress this year refused to provide

enough money to keep the Yucca Mountain waste project on schedule and a federal court earlier this year ordered a review of proposed radiation standards for the site.

Congress for four years has tried, and failed, to enact energy legislation. Bush has bowed to press lawmakers next year to try again.

The administration next year also will face continuing concerns about high oil prices and a winter that is expected to bring record high heating costs. Although crude prices have receded in recent weeks, they remain unusually high, edging up on Thursday to \$42.90 a barrel.

Bodman would replace Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham.

The nomination leaves one major opening in Bush's 15-member Cabinet: a candidate to replace Tommy Thompson as secretary of health and human services.

Gays regroup after suffering elections setbacks

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The ritual was replayed from Boston to San Francisco: Gays and lesbians shared marriage vows and slices of wedding cake.

After decades of seeking the same basic rights as most Americans, gay activists celebrated a long-sought achievement as the highest court in Massachusetts ruled that same-sex marriage was legal. In San Francisco,

Mayor Gavin Newsom performed gay marriages even though he had no similar court affirmation.

Gays thought barriers were finally crumbling. Then came the elections. Outraged by these images of gay couples, conservatives clamored for laws not only banning gay marriage but in some states for prohibiting civil unions and domestic partnerships. Nine of the 13 states that acted on or before Election Day on laws banning

gay marriage also banned other forms of recognition for same-sex relationships.

Effects of those measures already are being felt. Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm, a Democrat, will remove same-sex partner benefits from contracts negotiated with state workers after passage of the voter-approved amendment to the Michigan Constitution that bans gay marriage "and similar unions."

The lack of activists' success in the United States stands in contrast to Canada where the Supreme Court ruled Thursday that gay marriage was constitutional, allowing the government there to call on Parliament to legalize same-sex unions nationwide.

The string of U.S. election defeats — and the extent of the restrictions — has forced gay activists to reassess their strategy in what they see as a protracted fight for equal rights.

Intel bill expands counterterror powers

BY CURT ANDERSON

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — People indicted on terror charges will have a much harder time getting free on bail under a provision in the new intelligence bill. The provision also broadens the government's authority to spy on terror suspects.

Critics say the enforcement powers, attached to the bill with little debate in Congress, weaken civil liberties and privacy rights that already were undermined by the Patriot Act that was approved shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The new legislation broadens prohibitions against providing material support to terror groups, makes it a crime to visit a terror camp that provides military-style training and allows the FBI to obtain secret surveillance warrants against "lone wolf" extremists not known to be tied to a specific terrorist group. It also makes terrorism hoaxes a federal crime and toughens penalties against people who possess weapons of mass destruction.

President Bush's administration pushed to include the law enforcement package in

Details of anti-terror provisions

WASHINGTON — Law enforcement and anti-terrorism provisions are included in the intelligence legislation passed by Congress. The measure:

- Establishes a legal presumption that people charged with terrorism offenses not be released on bail unless they can convince a judge otherwise. Shifts the burden of proof for keeping such defendants detained from the government to the defense.

- Broadens the law making it a crime to provide material support to terror groups to include any type of resource or service.

- Enables the FBI to obtain a secret surveillance warrant on someone suspected of terrorism even if no ties can be established between that person and a

foreign country or international terror group. Would not apply to U.S. citizens.

- Increases penalties for unauthorized possession of weapons of mass destruction and components for such things as radioactive "dirty bombs," smallpox virus, shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles and nuclear weapons.

- Makes it a federal crime to perpetrate a terror hoax, such as a fake anthrax mailing, or make false reports about the death of someone in the U.S. armed forces.

- Allows federal prosecutors to share secret information obtained in grand jury proceedings with state, local or foreign law enforcement officers if it might help prevent a terrorist attack.

— The Associated Press

the intelligence measure to augment the Patriot Act, which expanded the government's surveillance and prosecutorial powers against suspected terrorists, their associates and financiers.

"We are pleased that Congress agreed that we still needed to improve our defenses," Justice Department spokesman Mark Corallo said.

Critics say the provisions escaped close

scrutiny because they were tucked into the massive bill creating a new national intelligence director.

"Overall, it's another threat to civil liberties in this country," said Charlie Mitchell, legislative counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union. "It's just a continuation of what the administration's been doing."

Under the bill, a legal presumption would be established denying bail for anyone indicted by a grand jury on terrorism charges.

Although the suspect could appeal to a judge, the burden of proof would be on the defendant to show release would be prudent.

That stipulation has been in place in federal courts for many violent and drug crimes but not for terrorism.

Skeptics say the provision has the potential to be abused, possibly resulting in long detentions for people ultimately found innocent.

"Unfortunately, this Justice Department has a record of abusing its detention powers post-9/11 and of making terrorism allegations that turn out to have no merit," said Democratic Sen. Russell Feingold.

Study: Southeast must do better job teaching Hispanics

BY KRISTEN WYATT

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The Southeast United States has the country's fastest-growing Hispanic population but is perhaps the region least prepared to teach public school students who don't know English, a new study shows.

Educators in the South are unprepared to teach immigrants, and in many cases discriminate against non-English speakers, according to the study conducted by the University of Southern California.

The result is lower test scores and higher dropout rates for Latino children.

"Some teachers just put them in the back of the room and teach their regular lessons because they don't know how to include immigrant students," researcher Andrew Wainer said Thursday.

Wainer and his colleagues interviewed 119 parents and educators in Georgia, Arkansas and North Carolina, the states that had nine of the 10 fastest-growing counties for Hispanic populations in the 1990s.

The study concluded that while many teachers have good inten-

tions for helping Spanish-speaking students, the overall inclusion of Hispanic students is "deeply flawed" in the South.

It recommended far more training for regular classroom teachers, not just second-language specialists.

At Georgia's Gainesville Elementary School, which has hundreds of Spanish-speaking children, Principal Shawn McCullough said some educators think their duty to include Hispanic students stops with a sombrero in the front office or "taco Tuesdays in the cafeteria."

"You can talk all day about how important it is to teach second-language learners. But until there's a fundamental commitment for success for our kids, that's never going to happen," he said at a news conference to announce the study results.

Latino students have far higher dropout rates than their black or non-Hispanic white peers. In the 1990s, that national Latino dropout rate was about 30 percent, compared with about 10 percent to 15 percent for the overall population. Among adults, Hispanics were the most likely to have left school before ninth grade, according to U.S. Census surveys.



Maria Hernandez Ferrier, who directs the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition, listens as Gainesville (Ga.) Elementary second-grader Esmeralda Moreno reads a book at the school Aug. 23. Gainesville Elementary has hundreds of Spanish-speaking children. On Thursday, the school's principal, Shawn McCullough, announced in Atlanta the results of a University of Southern California study examining how Spanish-speaking students are taught.

Treasury to print foreign currency

BY JEANNINE AVERSA

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The government's giant printing presses soon could be cranking out something in addition to the old greenback.

The Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing has gotten the go-ahead from Congress to print other countries' currencies.

A provision giving the bureau this authority is contained in a bill overhauling the country's intelligence operations. The bill is awaiting President Bush's signature to become law.

Although the government wouldn't profit from such ventures, bureau director Thomas Ferguson said the experience could help it sharpen its anti-counterfeiting skills.

"It would give us an opportunity to do some interesting things that we might be able to learn from and possibly use to help us do U.S. currency better," Ferguson said.

Currently, though, the bureau hasn't lined up the business of any countries, Ferguson said. It plans a very low-key marketing approach.

Government: Terrorists could use lasers to blind pilots

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Federal officials are concerned that terrorists could try to down aircraft by blinding pilots with laser beams during landing approaches.

A memo sent by law enforcement agencies recently by the FBI and the Homeland Security Department says there is evi-

dence that terrorists have explored using lasers as weapons.

"Although lasers are not proven methods of attacking aircraft, improvised explosive devices and hijackers, terrorist groups overseas have expressed interest in using these devices against human sight," the memo said.

"In certain circumstances, if laser weapons adversely affect the eyesight of both pilot and co-pilot during a non-instrument approach, there is a risk of airliner crash," the agencies said.

The federal authorities said there is no specific intelligence indicating al-Qaida or other groups might use lasers in the United

States.

Lasers can cause temporary blindness and severely damage the eye by burning the retina. The bulletin notes they are "relatively inexpensive, portable, easy to conceal and readily available on the open market."

Associated Press Writer Leslie Miller contributed to this story.

Yoyeurism targets camera-sneaks

BY JESSE J. HOLLAND

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Camera phones may make gawking Christmas gifts, but people better not use them for peeping-Tom photos on federal property.

In one of its latest moves of the year, Congress passed a bill that would levy heavy fines and prison time for anyone who sneaks photos or videos of people in various stages of undress, a problem lawmakers and activists called the new frontier of stalking.

While camera phone voyeurism probably won't be high on the list of federal crimes the FBI and other federal agencies pursue, "at least in theory there is now federal protection available so people can't unknowingly have their private parts photographed, downloaded and transmitted around the world," said Hana B. Kolko, a New York civil liberties lawyer.

The bill, which President Bush is expected to sign, would make it a crime to videotape or photograph the naked or under-dressed private parts of a person without consent when the person has a reasonable expectation of privacy. Conviction could

lead to a fine of not more than \$100,000 or imprisonment for up to one year, or both.

The measure got voice vote approval in both chambers of Congress — the House on Sept. 21 and the Senate on Tuesday.

The legislation would apply only in federal jurisdictions, such as federal buildings, national parks or military bases, but it carves out exceptions for law enforcement, intelligence and prison work.

The use of "nanny cams" and other hidden recording devices like pinhole cameras have been favorites of peeping Toms for years, lawmakers say. But the proliferation of tiny cellular telephones that can take pictures silently and shoot video has taken the crime out of bedrooms and bathrooms and into public places such as grocery stores, sidewalks and restaurants.

Some people then transfer the photos to Internet sites featuring what are called "upskirting" and "downblousing," lawmakers said.

"What this does is set a national standard for what is acceptable," it protects those crafted of a person's body that they wouldn't want to be photographed or videotaped,

and especially now that photography and video images can be downloaded and transmitted across the Internet within seconds around the world, it gives people protection from widespread exposure without their consent," he said.

Although the bill limits the jurisdiction to federal property, that doesn't mean it won't be used.

Navy officials in the past few years have twice found small cameras hidden in women's rooms on ships heading out of Norfolk, Va.

In March, a female officer on the cruiser USS Monterey discovered a small wireless camera mounted in the changing area of the women's shower, and in November 2002, Navy officials charged a first-class petty officer on destroyer USS Briscoe with planting a miniature video camera in a woman's room on that ship.

The Briscoe sailor pleaded guilty at a summary court-martial and has his rank reduced.

One was charged in the Monterey incident because the camera was not yet operable and the ship was unable to establish criminal liability to the commanding officer's satisfaction. Charles Owens, spokesman for the Atlantic Fleet Naval Surface Force, said Thursday.

Air security pat-downs to be changed

BY SARA KEHAULANI GOO

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Security screeners at the nation's airports will make a small adjustment to the way they conduct pat-down searches of passengers after receiving hundreds of complaints that the procedure was invasive, Transportation Security Administration sources said Thursday.

The change allows both male and female passengers to put down their arms after being screened on the upper body, sources said. Many passengers had said that standing in a "spread eagle" position throughout the inspection made them feel like criminals.

"We want to make the process less uncomfortable," said one TSA official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

TSA will begin training screeners on the change on Monday. The decision comes after agency officials met last week to discuss the large volume of complaints from travelers. Over the Thanksgiving holiday, millions of Americans were subjected to

pat-downs for the first time. The procedure calls for passengers to stand with arms straight out and legs spread apart while a TSA security screener waves a handheld metal detector over their body. The screener then puts down the passengers' body, including between and below women's breasts.

"This is such a minor change, it is really not significantly going to improve the situation," said Lenora Lupinski, director of the Women's Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union.

Since the TSA increased the frequency of the pat-downs in September, more than 300 passengers have complained about feeling uncomfortable. Some women said they would choose not to fly on an airline rather than undergo the pat-down. TSA said about 15 percent of the 1.8 million daily passengers are selected for the procedure, either because they set off the walk-through metal detector, were selected by screeners because of their suspicious clothing or were pre-selected by a computer system that flags passengers who buy one-way tickets or pay with cash.

Staff researcher Richard Dreyne contributed to this report.

Sleuthing by Microsoft helps officials crack case

The Associated Press

FRISCO, Texas — Some sleuthing by software giant Microsoft Corp. helped track down two brothers who authorities say sold bogus college degrees over the Internet, including an MBA that was issued to a housecat.

Officials in Pennsylvania cracked the case, tracking down the source of thousands of unsolicited e-mails. This week, they filed a lawsuit to shut down Trinity Southern University, run by

Crain Barton Poe, 35, of Frisco, and Alan Scott Poe, 40, of St. Cloud, Fla.

Trinity Southern sent 18,000 e-mails that appeared to come from legitimate outfits such as cable operator Comcast Corp., Pennsylvania State University and the Pennsylvania Senate, said Barbara Peto, a spokeswoman for the Pennsylvania attorney general's office.

Heeding complaints from the institutions about the hijacking of their Web sites, Microsoft

helped track the e-mails to the Poes, Peto said.

Pennsylvania authorities sued the Poes after plunking down \$398. Trinity Southern University had listed various addresses and claimed to be accredited by a university in Argentina and an education association, both of which turned out to be fictitious.

The school's Web site was not operating Thursday. There was no answer Thursday at Craig Poe's home. A phone number for Alan Poe had been disconnected.



Travis Marcus of Cabot, Ark., left, jokes around with his heart doctor, Dr. Jonathan Drummond-Webb, on Thursday at the Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock, Ark. Marcus recently received a heart transplant after being kept alive by a miniature heart pump. Marcus was the first child in the world to receive a new heart after using the pump.

Surgeon's invention saves heart transplant recipient

BY MELISSA NELSON

The Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — A 14-year-old Cabot boy survived for two months waiting for a heart transplant because of a 95-year-old heart surgeon's invention.

Travis Marcus became the first child in the world to receive a new heart after using the lifesaving miniature heart pump, known as the DeBakey Child Ventricular Assist Device.

Heart surgery pioneer Michael DeBakey, Marcus, his doctors and the miniature pump made medical history Nov. 11 at Arkansas Children's Hospital.

"Without the device he would have been dead. That's the bottom line," Dr. Jonathan Drummond-Webb, who performed both surgeries, told The Associated Press on Thursday after checking on his patient.

Considered the father of modern cardiovascular surgery, DeBakey traveled to Little Rock from his Houston home in October to check on Travis after Drummond-Webb transplanted the 1-by-3 inch, 4 ounce pump in the teen's heart Sept. 16.

The teenager and the near-centenarian met before Travis' heart transplant.

Nearly a month after his transplant, Travis is doing well joking with his doctors and watching his beloved Green Bay Packers on television, his parents said. A "Brett Favre Dr." sign adorns the door to his room. Access to visitors is limited because of his delicate post-transplant immune system.

"There's a slim possibility he could be out of the hospital by Christmas. We hope at least he'll be out of intensive care so that we can all be together in a hospital room," Travis' father, Rick Marcus, said.

Drummond-Webb said he regularly e-mails DeBakey, now the director of the DeBakey Heart Center at Houston's Baylor College of Medicine, with updates on Travis' condition.

Before Drummond-Webb implanted the DeBakey device in Travis' heart Sept. 16, the teenager, who was born with a congenital heart defect, had spent days on a heart-lung bypass machine.

The heart surgeon said the machine damages a patient's organs.

But he said Travis had no other options. He had had several major operations since he was born with a congenital defect in which the blood vessel that is supposed to carry blood to the lungs was pumping blood to his body, instead — and the vessel that pumps blood to the body was pumping blood to his lungs.

Made of titanium and plastic, the DeBakey device differs from other heart pumps in that the pump — with the tubing that carries the blood — fits inside the patient's chest and is powered by an external battery pack.

MicroMed Technology Inc. of Houston modified the DeBakey VAD for use in children and the federal government several months ago gave the miniature device a humanitarian exemption from its use in children.

But Drummond-Webb said the lifesaving device is useless without a supply of donated organs.

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Higher headquarters decides

I would like to know what were the sources used to determine that our higher headquarters considers Logistics Support Area Anacosta to be a garrison base ("Anacosta is not garrison," letter, Nov. 9).

The answer to the question: "Why are we required to wear our body armor and head protection at all times when outside?" is because our higher headquarters ordered us to because of the threat level increase. If our higher headquarters has ordered us to wear our protective gear, then maybe they don't consider LSA Anacosta a garrison base.

As far as the buildings on LSA Anacosta that are used to service the soldiers, the buildings used to be utilized for office space is available to be utilized for offices such as finance, personnel and for the Army and Air Force Exchange Service and Morale, Welfare and Recreation services, then it will be utilized instead of tents. These buildings were available and not built to provide overhead protection for soldiers, even though they can provide such protection.

Our higher headquarters has determined that soldiers speeding on base is a safety issue, so if the military police are ordered to give out tickets, then that is what they will do. If you are not an MP, then you can't assume that this is all that they do, because they may be rotating patrols, giving out speeding tickets and other things.

The overabundance of soldiers, if that is what the letter writer wants to call it, is a political issue and we can't just send a bunch of untrained trigger-happy soldiers out there.

Our higher headquarters has provided us the luxuries that we have to help us deal with a yearlong deployment and to prepare for future plans in Bosnia, not because they consider LSA Anacosta a garrison base. Terrorists have demonstrated that they will attack us on our own land and anywhere else in the world, so the

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threat is there if you are in a garrison environment or not, and our higher headquarters knows that.

Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Johnson

Logistics Support Area Anacosta, Iraq

Watch out for news spin

When I listen to any news source lately, I take the stories with some very large grains of salt. However, [recently] I heard American Forces Radio mention protesters against President Bush's visit to Canada as "thousands show up to protest the President."

A little swing from some non-spin Web news found a story (copyright 2004 Agence France Presse, no less) that was titled "Early and Bush demo fizzle in Canada." That article goes on to explain how the 42 journalists in attendance outnumbered the 39 protesters from various groups from Ottawa. Listen, Canadians are great people and most of them don't want to be lumped together with professional protesters of "everything under the sun."

We in America, and especially in the military, have a hard enough time listen-

ing to fellow Americans who love to protest but would never be caught dead helping to solve any real problems. Remember, governance is hard and peace is even harder.

American Forces Network, AFNR and Stars and Stripes: Please check your stories before you send them out into the ether. Most all news sources out there are spun or skewed in some way by the suggester bias. Even The Associated Press, United Press International and Reuters can't claim to be totally without their journalistic top spin. But sometimes "news" is merely shot-gunned from one source into the news that, for many soldiers, is the only one readily available. Then, we tend to believe what may turn out to be outright, boldfaced lies.

As for the story itself, can you imagine the agenda of a journalist who has to paint such an ugly face on a presidential visit to one of our oldest and greatest allies? Who would do such a thing? For shame!

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Dennis Busch
 Gieselstadt, Germany

Hunting photo unnecessary

Why was it necessary to depict the photo and caption about the deer hunting in Stripes (Nov. 3, American Roundup)?

I find this objectionable. I don't need to be reminded that there are plenty of yahoes out there attempting to prove their manhood (or lack of it) by killing innocent animals. What a cowardly act.

Perhaps a more beneficial use of this space would be if Stripes explained the consequences of this so-called sport, a description of what actually takes place when a buckshot makes contact with a deer or any other animal, and brutally maims or causes the sometimes-slow and agonizing death of these creatures, unless, of course they immediately drop dead.

It is disappointing that Stripes endorses this unnecessary, barbaric and depraved animalism.

Jacqueline Diaz
 Stuttgart, Germany

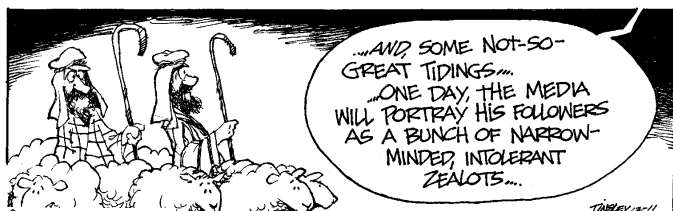
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Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons

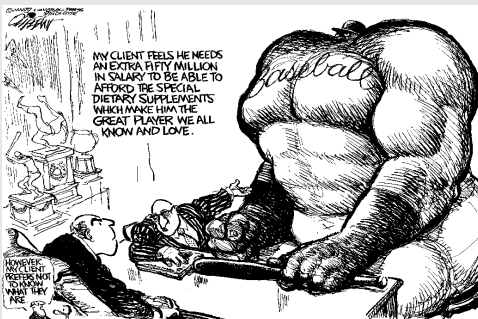
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IN THE WORLD



Nobel Peace Prize laureate Wangari Maathai waves to 3,000 children gathered to greet her outside Oslo City Hall on Friday.

Maathai receives Nobel in lively Oslo ceremony

BY DOUG MELLGREN
The Associated Press

OSLO, Norway — The first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize, environmental activist Wangari Maathai, received her award Friday to the beat of drums and dancers that broke with the usual staid ceremony, and she warned that humanity is "threatening its own life-support system."

Maathai received the traditional gold medal and diploma that accompanies the \$1.5 million prize at a ceremony in the Norwegian capital. A few hours later, Sweden's king awarded the Nobel prizes — medicine, physics, chemistry, literature and economics — in Stockholm.

Bengt Samuelsson, chairman of the board of the Nobel Foundation, addressed the frequently

heard criticism that few women have received the Nobel Prize over the years. While only 31 of the 705 Nobel Prizes handed out since 1901 have gone to women, Samuelsson pointed out that three of this year's laureates are women.

"If the history of the Nobel Prize during its first century was a reflection of 19th- and early 20th-century values, maybe this year's awards are a glimpse of the changes we will see during this century," Samuelsson said.

One of the women, however, was a no-show at the ceremony: literature laureate Elfriede Jelinek. The Austrian writer says she has a social phobia. The third woman winner was Linda B. Buck, who shared the medicine prize with fellow American Richard Axel.

Maathai's Nobel prize is the

first to acknowledge environmentalism as a means of building peace. In Oslo, the 64-year-old Kenyan — wearing a traditional dress, a bright orange scarf tied in her hair — warned that the world remained under attack from disease, deforestation and war.

"Today, we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life-support system," she Kenyan told the crowd of dignitaries, who included the Norwegian royal family as well as talk show host Oprah Winfrey and Kerry Kennedy, a daughter of the late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

"We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and, in the process, heal our own; indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder," Maathai said.

OPEC approves plan to cut daily oil production

BY GEORGE JAHN
The Associated Press

CAIRO, Egypt — Juggling between its need to keep prices up without having them explode, OPEC agreed Friday to reduce its daily oil output by 1 million barrels a day — and reserved the right to cut deeper early next year if crude turns much cheaper than now.

The move represented a decision by OPEC to go down the middle, in a bid to prevent further revenue losses amid a recent downward price trend, while trying to reduce the kind of volatility that rocketed prices up to record highs earlier this year, leading producers scrambling to meet demand.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali Naimi said the cut will be implemented starting Jan. 1. He told reporters that OPEC would meet again at month's end to review the cut's effect on prices, which have fallen sharply recently but remain high above previous established levels.

If effective, the output reduction would scale back output to the group's overall ceiling of 27 million barrels a day.

OPEC's two other options — doing nothing, and risking continued losses, or reducing the quota target and precipitating a new oil crisis — were clearly not appealing to members. Their decision to try and end quota busting appeared to be a bid to reduce the risks both ways.

Still, the decision to meet again Jan. 20 was meant as a signal that

OPEC was ready to defend current prices — a message driving home at the Cairo meeting by several oil ministers.

"We will implement this cut and watch the market," Libya's oil minister Fathi Hamed Ben Shatwan told reporters. "If there are good prices, then fine. If prices keep dropping, then we'll take new action."

In another bid to keep markets from rolling, the 11-nation group resisted pressure from some members to raise its target rates — the prices it sees as fair — for OPEC crudes.

"We will implement this cut and watch the market."

Fathi Hamed Ben Shatwan

Libya's oil minister, on concerns over gas prices

That band is now at between \$22 to \$28, below the lower \$30s some members would like to see it at and far under present market prices.

Still, oil ministers made clear that prices have been raised at least informally.

Naming \$32 as his country's bottom line, Iran's Bijan Namdar Zangeneh, told reporters. "We are concerned about prices dropping."

"We should be very careful and monitor the market very closely," he added.

OPEC Secretary General Purnomo Yusgiantono of Indonesia touched on the need for stability after months of "excessive speculative activity."

He said the group would reassess its current price band at the January meeting in Vienna.

Sentiment for turning down the spigots gathered momentum earlier this week when oil giant Saudi Arabia indicated it was receptive to the idea.

Russia reiterates its right to use preventive strikes

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov on Friday emphasized Russia's right to conduct preventive strikes against terrorists anywhere across the globe, suggesting it has become common practice for the United States as it flexes its military muscles in a world threatened by terrorism.

Russian strikes could come anywhere in the world, Ivanov said, but he ruled out the use of nuclear weapons.

"All other methods, in my opinion, are good and acceptable here," Ivanov told a group of military attaches from foreign embassies after delivering

an annual report on Russia's defense plans.

"I have already said many times that war has been declared against us. And war is war," he said.

Russia is "by no means the only country that has said it could use preventive strikes. We did not think this up," he said, answering a question submitted by one of the attaches in his audience at the academy of the Russian military's general staff.

"Secondly, we see in practice that such strikes are conducted in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in other regions of the world," he said, suggesting the United States but mentioning no country by name.

Bomb kills at least 11 in Pakistan

BY NASEER KAKAR
The Associated Press

QUETTA, Pakistan — Assaults set off a powerful time bomb next to an army truck parked in a teeming outdoor market in southwestern Pakistan on Friday, killing at least 11 people and injuring more than two dozen others, police and hospital officials said.

The bomb, hidden on a bicycle, blew out windows, shredded the truck's canvas cover and left blood and debris over a wide area of the market in Quetta, the main city in Baluchistan province, said police chief Rehman Ullah.

The dead included one soldier and 10 vendors and passers-by, Pervaz Bhatti, a senior police official, told Pakistan's private Geo

television. Several of the 27 injured people were in critical condition, he said.

Hours after the blast, a little-known group, the Baluchistan National Army, claimed responsibility, but said it never wanted to kill civilians.

"Our target was the army truck and the soldiers," said the group's spokesman, Mir Azad Baluch, in a telephone call to a journalist in Quetta.

He said their group was also behind previous similar attacks.

He warned it would "continue to target military personnel until the federal government abandons plans to set up new garrisons in Baluchistan, and gives the people of our province their due share from the resources."

Baluchistan has been hit by a series of low-level bombings in recent years, most of which have not caused any casualties and have been blamed on feuding tribesmen.

But the group is opposed to plans to set up new Pakistan Army garrisons in the province and has been trying to pressure authorities to get more returns from natural gas extracted from their region.

President Gen. Pervez Musharraf said the blast was perpetrated by people "working against peace and development in the country," and called on security agencies to capture those responsible.

Quetta mayor Rahnim Kakar blamed "nationalists who don't want to see progress in Baluchistan."

American travelers fly into Vietnam

By MARGIE MASON
The Associated Press

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam — For the first time since the war ended nearly 30 years ago, a U.S. passenger jet was on its way to Vietnam on Friday.

United Flight 869 took off from San Francisco on Thursday and was scheduled to land in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon, at 10:25 p.m. Friday local time.

It will be the first U.S. commercial plane to touch down at Tan Son Nhat International Airport since the wartime capital of South Vietnam fell to the communists in 1975.

U.S. relations with Vietnam have improved considerably in recent years. The two countries established diplomatic ties in 1995, and in 2001 they signed a landmark trade agreement, followed by an aviation pact last year.

In November 2003, the first U.S. Navy ship since the Vietnam War docked on the Saigon River. United Airlines, which filed for bankruptcy two years ago, is betting the daily flight to Vietnam will be a big moneymaker. The carrier says it expects air travel to Vietnam to grow 10.5 percent a year in the next decade.

Among the 347 people on the flight was 48-year-old Van Trinh,



Actor David Hasselhoff, right, and his wife, Pamela Hasselhoff, board a United Airlines flight at San Francisco International Airport to Vietnam on Thursday. This is the first scheduled flight of a U.S. airline to Vietnam in almost 30 years. David Hasselhoff is bringing wheelchairs for the disabled on behalf of Wheels for Humanity. The ticket attendant is John Wilcock.

one of the tens of thousands of Vietnamese who fled the country in boats after the war. "I'm excited to see Vietnam now because 30 years is too long," she said before boarding the Boeing 747-400.

Trinh is among 1 million ethnic

Vietnamese who live in the United States, the largest population outside Vietnam. Many visit Vietnam every year.

The country is also a popular destination with American veterans who want to see how it has

changed. "The United Airlines link between the two countries will not only serve Vietnamese nationals living in America, but I was told that 45 million Americans wanted to travel to Vietnam, and that is a very big market," said Nguyen Xuan Hien, Vietnam Airlines president and CEO.

Many Americans who fought in the war have vivid memories of Tan Son Nhat airport, where they caught Pan American "freedom birds" home or to rest stops such as Hong Kong and Japan.

Now-defunct Pan American was the last commercial U.S. carrier to fly out of Vietnam before the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975. Meanwhile Vietnam's state-owned carrier has expressed interest in opening its own route to San Francisco by the end of next year or early 2006.

And American Airlines has established a partnership with Vietnam Airlines Corp. that allows them to complete journeys for each other's passengers. But American does not fly directly to Vietnam.

"The new United Airlines route is a new indicator of the strong relations between the United States and Vietnam," U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Michael Marine said.

Associated Press writer Billen Meslin in San Francisco contributed to this report.

Court rejects stoning

KANO, Nigeria — An Islamic appeals court in northern Nigeria threw out a sentence ordering a 25-year-old mother be stoned to death for adultery.

Judge Suleiman Yusuf of the Upper Shariah Court in the rural town of Ningi said Daso Adamu's conviction in September was based on flawed evidence.

Adamu, whose conviction was based on her giving birth, had been married and divorced twice. She had allegedly confessed to committing adultery but later retracted the confession.

The man she named as the father of her baby had been acquitted of adultery by the lower court for lack of evidence.

Sgt. causes false alarm

LONDON — A drunken soldier sparked a security alert when he left a costume party dressed as a suicide bomber, wearing a turban, false beard and a combat jacket stuffed with pretend explosives, British police said Friday.

A member of the public called police after seeing the sergeant in his costume walking along a road near the Aldershot army base in southern England on Wednesday.

He was charged with a public order offense and fined around \$150, police said.

Food shortage in space

MOSCOW — The two-man crew on the international space station could be forced to return to Earth if a planned flight cannot reach them with food supplies later this month, a Russian space official said Friday.

"I don't want to discuss this possibility, and I won't call it emergency evacuation; I'd rather call it termination of the international mission ahead of time," Russian Space Agency spokesman Vyacheslav Davidenko said.

A Progress supply ship carrying food and other supplies is to launch Dec. 24 and reach the station Dec. 26. The crew already has been ordered to cut back on calories because food is running short.

NASA said Thursday there was food to last seven to 14 days beyond Dec. 25 if the supply ship did not arrive, and called the situation "critical."

From The Associated Press

Powell tries to strengthen EU-U.S. ties

By GEORGE GEDDA
The Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — Secretary of State Colin Powell took his campaign for closer ties with Europe to the Netherlands on Friday, meeting with European Union officials after discussions earlier in the week in Bulgaria and Belgium.

Powell met with Javier Solana, the EU's foreign affairs chief, and with Dutch Foreign Minister Ben Bot, whose government is winding up a six-month term as the EU president under the union's

rotating system.

Dutch and U.S. officials said Powell's talks would focus on the Middle East but would range farther afield to other world crisis points, including the former Soviet republic of Ukraine.

Powell planned an afternoon departure for Morocco for an international conference on political, economic and social development in the Arab world.

On Thursday, former Irish Prime Minister John Bruton presented his credentials to President George Bush as the EU Com-

mission's representative to the United States.

In a letter to Bush, Bruton said he regarded his new position as an opportunity to further strengthen EU-U.S. ties, which constitute "the most important economic relationship in world history" and "the indispensable partnership" in tackling the scourge of terrorism, fighting poverty and working for peace and stability around the world.

Before his official talks here, Powell fielded questions from Dutch university students. He

said the Palestinian elections set for next month coupled with the plan of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to withdraw from Gaza open opportunities for a peaceful settlement in the region.

On Iran, he said he was optimistic about the prospects for political liberalization because of the pressure that younger Iranians will be exerting on the Islamic government for change.

He also called attention to the major role the European Union is playing in an effort to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

LOOK FOR
HOLIDAY GREETINGS
FROM FOLKS BACK HOME

in your December 16th
STARS AND STRIPES Middle East edition

STARS AND STRIPES
Your Hometown Newspaper



Odor closes school

MA PEMBRROKE — A mysterious odor that's making some students sick has forced town officials to close Bryantville Elementary School until they can figure out what's causing the stench.

The school, which received a \$15 million renovation two years ago, was shut down by the Board of Health after a unanimous vote.

A smell of burnt rubber was first detected in early November after the cafeteria ceiling was painted with a sealant intended to prevent mold growth.

Tests to determine the source of the smell are scheduled. In the meantime, town officials are coming up with alternative plans to educate roughly 570 students in grades K-6.

Trespassing swines

FL MELBOURNE — All over one suburban subdivision, wild pigs have left their mark.

There was a dead cat. Ruth Strabosky's lawn was shredded when she was on vacation. Trespassing swine have been spotted along Wright Avenue and Corbusier Drive, congregating in rummaging hordes of up to 20 animals.

The animals come from the adjacent, unfenced land owned by the Melbourne Airport Authority.

After a rash of complaints from the neighborhood Homeowners Association, the airport authority agreed to a one-year contract with two licensed trappers to try to thwart the hog onslaught.

Volcano brush fire

HI VOLCANO — What at first appeared to be a fiery eruption at Kilauea Volcano turned out to be a brush fire that scorched more than 850 acres and threatened a native shrub in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park on the Big Island, officials said.

Through the day, 20 park personnel and seven Hawaii County firefighters battled the blaze.

Three helicopters — one each from the park, county and Hilo-based tour operator Tropical Helicopters, made water drops after filling their buckets from a frog pond along a road.

"We want to assure our neighboring communities there is no risk on the attack; we are fighting this fire aggressively," Park Superintendent Cindy Orlando said.

Woman survives accident

IN ANDERSON — A woman survived being impaled by a 12-foot metal fence post that pierced through her mouth and came out the back of her neck in a car accident, authorities said.

Emergency crews had to saw off part of the 1½-inch thick fence rail to free Alejandra Martinez, who was still awake when crews arrived at the scene. Fire officials were shocked to find her alive.

Martinez drove through a stop sign at an intersection and hit another car, Anderson police spokesman Terry Sollars said. She then lost control, careened off the road and went through a chain-link fence.

The car hit a concrete porch, shoving it three feet back, Sollars said. The metal rod from the fence went through the driver's side of the windshield, he said.



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

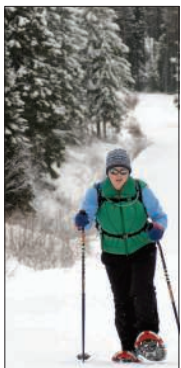
Man tortures stray dog

TX SAN ANGELO — An 18-year-old man was sentenced to two years probation for torturing a stray dog by hitting it with a skateboard, a case that drew national attention when a videotape of the attack showed up on the Internet.

The dog, a red chow-German shepherd mix, was euthanized after no one adopted it following the March 1 attack, according to court documents. Animal-rights Web sites posted the video and organized letter-writing campaigns urging harsh punishment.

The video, played in court, shows the dog lying in a corner next to a vending machine in a parking garage when Jonathan Benjamin Johnson lunges forward, smashing a skateboard with two hands into the side of the dog's head. The dog, after first jumping and barking, begins to stagger against the machine.

As the dog tries to turn away into the corner, another blow with the skateboard is delivered to its neck. The dog then curls into the corner. Johnson also was fined \$500 and ordered to complete 60 hours of community service. Johnson is also to avoid contact with Kevin Ward Wright, 18, whose trial on the same state jail felony charge of cruelty.



Winter walk

Heidi Reindl of Columbia Falls, Mont., snowshoes below Chair 6 on her way to the top of Big Mountain in Whitefish, Mont.

Brighter futures

CO DENVER — The drought isn't officially over, but the state's water supply is improving and farmers and ranchers are seeing a brighter future for the first time in four years. Trade pacts like the North American Free Trade Agreement have increased exports, raising prices for beef, wheat and vegetables, Colorado Farm Bureau officials said.

Airport standstill

CA SANTA ANA — An Orange County airport was temporarily brought to a standstill after a passenger vanished with a suspicious bag, prompting authorities to empty 10 planes and force hundreds of people to make a second trip through security screening. The precautionary step tangled air traffic at John Wayne Airport for as long as three hours.

Vaseline vandalism

NY BINGHAMTON — A Virginia man admitted to smearing 14 jars of petroleum jelly all over an update New York motel room.

Robert F. Chamberlain, 45, of McLean, gave no reason for his actions when he appeared in court to plead guilty to a misdemeanor charge of criminal mischief.

A Broome County judge sentenced Chamberlain to three years of probation and ordered him to pay \$3,886 in damages to the Motel 6 in Chenango.

Authorities said Chamberlain costed every object of the motel room with petroleum jelly in May. A cleaning crew discovered the mess after he checked out, and he was arrested at another motel covered in the greasy stuff.

Gorillas mourn leader

IL BROOKFIELD — After Babs the gorilla died at age 30, keepers at Brookfield Zoo decided to allow surviving gorillas to mourn the most influential female in their social family.

One by one, the gorillas filed into the Tropic World building where Babs' body lay, arms outstretched. Curator Melinda Pruett Jones called it a "gorilla wake."

Keepers said the display wasn't surprising.

"She was the dominant female of the group, the peacekeeper, the disciplinarian, the one who kept things in a harmonious state," Pruett Jones said.

Babs had an incurable kidney condition and was euthanized. Keepers had recently seen a videotape of a gorilla wake at the Columbus, Ohio, zoo and decided they would do the same for Babs. Gorillas in the wild have been known to pay respects to their dead, keepers said.

Online payment service

AR LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas launched an online service to help ensure children get the support they're owed. Parents can make their child-support payments online by going to a secured Web site and logging into their account with a private password. Currently, more than 162,000 child-support payments are submitted each month in Arkansas by mail or in person.



Powerful kid

Nicholas Norton, 3, of Chenango Bridge, N.Y., puts all of his might into applying glue to pine cones as he makes a wreath out of mixed red pine, scotch pine, almonds, hickory nuts, rosehips, hemlock and cinnamon sticks at Finch Hollow Nature Center in Johnson City, during "Make a Nature Wreath" class.



We're cute, we know it

Eeyor and Jesus, two miniature donkeys who reside at the Pride and Joy Ranch in Vacaville, Ca., take a moment to pose for a picture.



Heartful performance

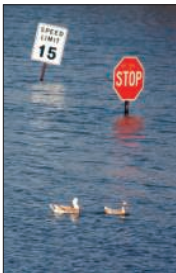
Dwana Adiah Smallwood, left, Clifton Brown, center, and Hope Boykin perform in "Love Stories" in Kansas City, Mo.



Slippery accident Janesville firefighter Bob Gabbey keeps an eye on a SUV as it is removed from the swimming pool deck of the YMCA in Janesville, Wis. The vehicle's driver was pulling into a parking stall when the vehicle accelerated through the window and dropped six feet to the deck. The car came to rest with its nose on the floor and rear wheels still on the building's foundation, just missing a plunge into the deep end of the pool. The driver was not injured in the incident.



Rainy days A pedestrian walks in the rain across the campus of the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Miss.



Duck traffic A pair of ducks swim in the floodwaters of the Tennessee River at Ditto Landing in south Huntsville, Ala. The stop sign and speed limit signs are along roads leading to the marina's boat slips.



Frisbee in December College of Charleston student Eric Oliver tosses a flying disk to his friend Bud Yackey, not pictured, at Marion Square park in Charleston, S.C., as Christmas trees stand in the background.

ACLU against new law

CA SAN FRANCISCO — The American Civil Liberties Union is asking a federal judge to overturn California's voter-approved Proposition 69, which greatly expands the number of people whose DNA is included in law enforcement databases.

"Proposition 69 is an extraordinary assault on the privacy and security of all Californians," said Maya Harris, an ACLU attorney and director of the Racial Justice Project. "It turns the presumption of innocence on its head."

In a lawsuit filed Tuesday in federal district court in San Francisco, the ACLU says the new law—which requires DNA samples be taken from everyone convicted of a felony, and, in 2009, anyone arrested for a felony—is unconstitutional and a violation of privacy.

Teen hit by train

CO DENVER — Moments before slamming on the brakes of a northbound light-rail train, the driver looked up and locked eyes with a 13-year-old boy standing in the middle of the tracks.

The driver, whose name has not been released, hit the brakes, but the train was traveling 40 mph and still plowed into the boy. It eventually stopped with the teen wedged under a bumper guard.

"As soon as she saw the kid run up the embankment and stand on the tracks and stare right at her, she slammed on the brakes," police spokesman Perry Schellinger said. "We are still trying to figure out why he did what he did."

The unidentified teen, who turned 13 in November, was listed in serious but stable condition Tuesday.

Parents go on strike

FL DELTONA — Even though the dishes, garbage and dirty laundry were piling up, homeowners Cat and Harlan Barnard were getting no help from their two children.

After begging and pleading with their 17-year-old son and 12-year-old daughter to help out around the house, the Barnards decided they were fed up. So they went on strike — and moved out to the front yard.

"This was our last-ditch effort," Cat Barnard said.

Since Monday morning, the Barnards have lived in a tent in their front yard, going inside the house only to use the restroom or shower. The couple sits on lawn chairs and roasts marshmallows over a hibachi.

Their children were confused on the first day when they came home from school. "It's extremely inconvenient," said their son, Ben Barnard. "Every time the phone rings, we have to run outside to give it to them."

Whether the couple's actions could be regarded as abandonment depends on how much guidance the parents are still providing and "if the children are suffering as a result," said Carrie Hoepfner, a spokeswoman with the Department of Children & Families in Orange County.

But Cat Barnard says the strike may already be paying dividends.

She noted that her daughter washed her own clothes for the

first time on Tuesday.

"This is war," Cat Barnard said. "I love my babies, but I don't like what they're doing."

'Star Wars' dream

NJ GLOUCESTER TOWN-SHIP — Not so long ago in a galaxy far, far away — or just southeast of Philadelphia — Mike Degirolamo had a plan.

He wanted to build a 20-by-12-foot model of a Jawa Sandcrawler, a hulking transport vehicle from the original "Star Wars" film, before the next installment of the saga "Star Wars: Episode III: Revenge of the Sith" opens in May.

First, the property is a historic residence, but rather, he doesn't need the Force, but the power to persuade the township council it's a worthy project.

The council is planning a special meeting to discuss whether Degirolamo will be allowed to erect the model on the property of a local business.

There are two concerns about the proposed meeting of the fantasy and real worlds, according to township community development director Ed Sayers.

First, the property is in a historic redevelopment area where the Sandcrawler might not fit in architecturally. Also, it could be a liability.

"This is certainly one of those gray areas," Sayers said.

"This could wind up being an attractive nuisance and a safety concern if kids try to climb on it."

A lifesaving gift

IN ANDERSON — The Anderson Fire Department has a holiday gift that has a real lifesaving ring to it — ambulance service subscription cards.

The cards cost \$25 and can save the recipient \$225 to \$400 on a trip to the hospital depending on the amount of care needed. The cards are good for one ride and expire after a year.

"It would be a good Christmas gift if you know a needy family who might need medical care," said fire department Capt. Denny Jones.

The cards have been available since 1996, when the city about 35 miles northeast of Indianapolis began charging for ambulance service. But this is the first year the department has promoted them.

"It used to be that we only sold them twice a year, but now they're available all year," said Leona Brown, the fire department's billing coordinator.

Don't feed the geese

NV RENO — The increasing population of geese in the Reno-Sparks area is causing officials to consider a ban on feeding waterfowl. Under the proposal, feeding waterfowl would be prohibited at Virginia Lake and most other city properties.

Town may buy orchard

NH HOLLIS — At a town meeting next week, voters will consider spending more than \$4 million to protect 261 acres. Voters will consider buying the 181-acre Woodmont Orchard and 80 acres of woodlands. About 20 percent of the town's 21,000 acres is protected from development.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES

Joan and Melissa Rivers are back

There's just no keeping Joan and Melissa Rivers off Hollywood's red carpets. The mother-daughter tandem, shut out of this year's Emmy Awards because of a contractual tangle, will return starting with next month's Golden Globe Awards.



Melissa and Joan Rivers

Globe nominees and guests as they arrive at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on Jan. 16.

"It's been a mess, it's been a very messy couple of months," Joan Rivers said Tuesday. "I think they have their acts together. I just want to get back to work."

She said she expects to be on hand for all the Hollywood awards in 2005.

Will Hollywood's stars be more carefully dressed knowing they'll again be facing the sharp-tongued Rivers women? "They better be," Melissa Rivers said.

Shalala may join all-male football club

The Miami Touchdown Club, a group for football fans and former players that raises money for charities and college scholarships, has agreed to change its rules to accept University of Miami President Donna Shalala as its first female member.

Shalala had told the 45-year-old club she wanted to apply last month after a female lawyer's earlier application was rejected.

Club President Adam Lubkin sent an e-mail notifying Shalala of her acceptance.

Shalala has yet to apply to the organization, school spokeswoman Sarah Arrecona said Wednesday. Shalala, who was President Clinton's secretary of health and human services, was traveling on school business and wasn't immediately available for comment.

Coral Gables lawyer Natalie Lenos, a Miami football season-ticket holder, applied for membership in September, but was told the club only accepted men.



Shalala

Country singer Dickens reportedly ill

Veteran country singer Little Jimmy Dickens reportedly was hospitalized with pneumonia.

WSMV-TV reported Tuesday that the 83-year-old Grand Ole Opry star, who has performed on the live country show almost continuously since 1948, had been admitted to an unidentified Nashville hospital last weekend. The station said he was improving.

A spokeswoman for the Grand Ole Opry didn't return a phone call Tuesday night.

Dickens was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1983. His hits include "May the Bird of Paradise Fly up Your Nose," and "A-Sleepin' at the Foot of the Bed."

'The Incredibles' nominated for Annnies

"The Incredibles," Pixar Animation Studios' tale of a superhero family struggling with supervillains and suburban life, tops the list of nominees for the 32nd annual Annie Awards.

"The Incredibles" got 16 nominations while DreamWorks' "Shrek 2" and "Shark Tale" had seven each, according to a Monday announcement by the International Animated Film Society, which will present the awards on Jan. 30 in Glendale, Calif.

Nominations for "The Incredibles" include best animated feature, directing, music and voice acting for Samuel L. Jackson, who plays the hero Frozone, and Brad Bird as the fashion designer Edna Mode.

Other nominees for top animated feature include "Shrek 2," "Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence" and "The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie."

Nominated for best animated television production were the "SpongeBob SquarePants" show, "My Life as a Teenage Robot," "Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends," "Star Wars: The Clone Wars" and "Batman."

Society members will vote on the nominations, which were made by a committee.

Stories and photos from wire services

Ten secrets behind SpongeBob SquarePants

BY ANTHONY BREZNICAN

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES

America's favorite deep-sea sponge is coming to the surface.

SpongeBob SquarePants, a goofy sink utensil who wears a little brown suit and lives in a pineapple at the bottom of the ocean, has spent the past five years on the Nickelodeon TV channel. Now a new animated film sends him to a "real world" both simple and surreal.

Here are 10 little-known facts about "The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie" and the origin of a cartoon cult icon:

1. The birth of SpongeBob: The movie's director and "SpongeBob" creator Stephen Hillenburg was a former marine science teacher who wanted to do a sea cartoon. "I really wanted to do something about one character, based on an innocent who is surrounded by more cynical beings ... A sort of awkward, nerdy goofball, oddball," he said.

Fish seemed too ordinary, so he started thinking about a sponge.

"I drew these natural sponges for a while and gave them googly eyes and it didn't come together until I drew a sink sponge one day. I thought, 'This is the guy.' He's the square peg, literally, in this world of animals."

2. Helium voice: Tom Kenny, who supplies SpongeBob's high, nasal voice, was a standup comic who worked with Hillenburg on the 1993 animal cartoon series "Rocko's Modern World." When "SpongeBob" started in 1999, Hillenburg remembered an obscure character Kenny did years earlier, and envisioned it as the voice of his weird sea hero.

"It was in one episode in a crowd scene," Kenny recalled. "In the voice-over world we call the sound 'walla,' just a crowd of people mumbling and grumbling. Steve remembered I had done this squeaky, helium-voiced elf guy. Just a total throwaway voice."

3. Nine times as absorbent: Most half-hour SpongeBob TV episodes are made of 10-minute shorts, so the new 90-minute film required a different kind of story: SpongeBob and his slow-

witted starfish friend Patrick travel to the surface to rescue the crown of temperamental King Neptune.

4. Bald spot: Among the movie's celebrity voices is Jeffrey Tambor as the overly angry King Neptune, whose missing crown reveals his balding baldness.

Tambor, the criminal father from the Emmy-winning comedy "Arrested Development" and the pathetic "Hey, now!" announcer from "The Larry Sanders Show," said he shares the follicle-challenged scalp of the character, but not his insecurities.

"I don't have those issues. I look lousy in a rug," Tambor said. "I worked because of being bald, so I'm blessed. I mean, I was the guy in summer stock [theater] who played all the old guys at 16."

5. Patrick the starfish: Bill Fagerbakke, best known as Dauber from TV's "Coach," is a naturally deep voice, but has to swallow it further to play SpongeBob's dopey starfish friend Patrick.

The result, he said, is an audible version of the fat/skinny look of comedy teams like Laurel and Hardy or Abbott and Costello — Patrick is the immense rumbler and SpongeBob is the high-pitched whiner.

"I just kinda pretend my mouth is in my chest and I just slooowww down," Fagerbakke said.

6. Undersea songwriter: Besides doing SpongeBob's voice, Kenny also wrote two songs for the movie's soundtrack: one with the title here singing "The Best Day Ever" and another with Patrick singing "Under My Rock."

A group of old-time pirates sings the theme song in the film, and Avril Lavigne belts it out on the soundtrack CD.

7. Hasselhoff to the rescue: Former "Baywatch" star David Hasselhoff appears in live action as a lifeguard who jumps in to help SpongeBob and Patrick in a critical moment.

"We wrote the entire sequence without asking him," Hillenburg said. "Fortunately, he's a great guy. ... He didn't even see the material and said, 'I'm in.' He was great at making fun of himself."

8. Why adults like SpongeBob: "It's about keeping your kid-nature in life and not totally becoming a curmudgeon," Hillenburg said. "As we get older it gets harder to do that."

"SpongeBob's job is to be just be positive and think that every day is going to be the best day ever," Kenny added. "The people around him either find that delightful or ... just irritating."

9. Wife swap: Kenny's real-life wife, comic Jill Talley, supplies the deadpan voice of Karen — the computer program "wife" of the character Plankton, who is a tiny, green, megalomaniacal sea villain.

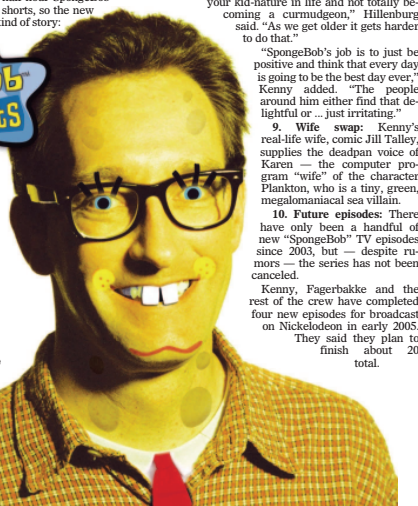
10. Future episodes: There have only been a handful of new "SpongeBob" TV episodes since 2003, but — despite rumors — the series has not been canceled.

Kenny, Fagerbakke and the rest of the crew have completed four new episodes for broadcast on Nickelodeon in early 2005.

They said they plan to finish about 20 total.

Stand-up comic Tom Kenny loves his job as the voice for SpongeBob SquarePants, who now stars in "The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie." "I get paid to do all this stuff you get yelled at in school," Kenny said.

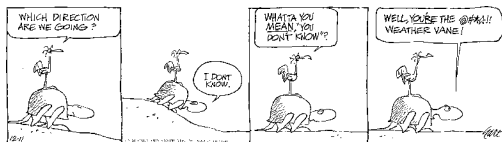
AP Photo Illustration by Bill Webster
The Washington Post



Fotrot



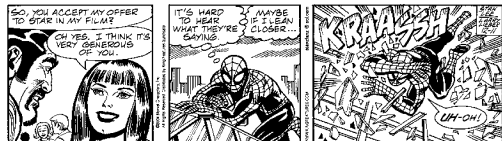
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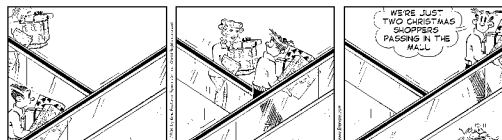
Baby Blues



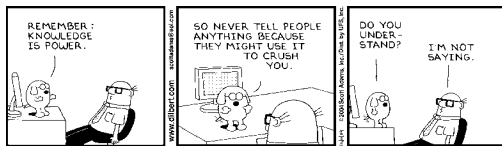
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Blondie



Dilbert



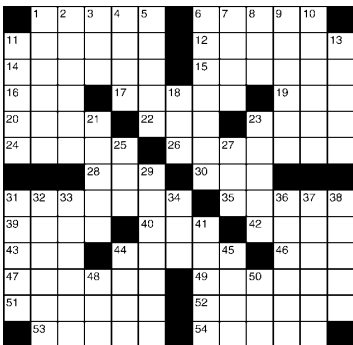
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 "Get lost!"
6 Half a 1960s quartet
11 in
12 Wards off
14 North American land
15 Mideastern land
16 Possessive pronoun
17 — numeral
19 Greek vowel
20 It takes the cake
22 "Platoon" setting
23 Not loose
24 Brought back
25 Tastes
26 Insult (SL)
30 Scale member
31 Any old person
35 Kid-lit author Dahl
39 LPs, CDs, etc. (Abbr.)
40 Chaps
42 Branch
43 "You — There"
44 De-squeaked
46 Khan title
47 European land
49 Mediterranean land
51 Merchant
52 Cutlery
53 Cowardly one
54 They often battle

Down

- 1 Endeavor
2 Went after
3 Cartoonist
4 Eastern potentate (Var.)
5 Crenshaw, e.g.
6 Nightwear
7 Shakespeare's river
8 Apiece
9 Zealous
10 Museum piece
11 Detest
13 Unexpected problems
18 Treasure seeker's aid
21 Some are real posers
23 Corporate division
25 King Louis —
27 Fate
29 Wine description
31 Covers completely
32 Medal earners
33 Peacock-tail spots
34 Cath., or Prot.
36 Suffer from deprivation
37 Medley connectors
38 Pile up
41 Parts of guitars
44 Individuals
45 Unit of force
48 Hirt and Gore
50 Snaps

Answer to Previous Puzzle



12-11 CRYPTOQUIP

BCWX MCVM MEVQDU
UZN CVJMWX MCW TXZBLVX,
ZXW LDRCM TVF QEZTMF

BVT TMZNNWH UZJH
Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF MY DINNER PLATE IS FOUR-CORNERED, I SUPPOSE YOU COULD SAY I EAT SQUARE MEALS.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: Q equals F

Work harassment can be stopped

Dear Abby: I'm a 25-year-old recent college graduate who just started a new job. I love it here because I'm doing something I care about and earn decent money. I like all of my co-workers with the exception of one. This person, "Jim," interrupts my work a lot, says things like "Hey, beautiful!" and calls me things like "my girl." The other day he said, "It's too hot outside." I replied cheerfully, "Sorry, I had nothing to do with it, and he said in a creepy manner, "You have a lot to do with it."

This is bothersome because I think Jim is a nice person, but he makes me uncomfortable. He has worked here a lot longer than I have. I don't want to say anything to the boss because I'm the new girl. I have been here only a few weeks, and I don't want to make trouble.

At the same time, I'm tired of Jim walking into my office, sitting down, talking for long peri-

ods and making off-color remarks. If I close my door, I'll appear anti-social, but I'm tired of being badgered because he's bored or because I'm the only young female in the office. I don't want to get anyone in trouble—I just want it to stop.

Dear Abby



North Carolina
Dear Trapped: You are entitled to be comfortable in the workplace and free from unwanted conduct. State and federal laws guarantee you the right to be free of unwelcome talk based on gender. Ideally, you should tell this man that he is making you uncomfortable. However, if you cannot bring yourself to do it, I urge you to document what is going on and bring your concerns to the attention of your boss or the person who handles human resources at your company.

Dear Abby: I am a 26-year-old female in the Navy. I

have been divorced for two years and have two beautiful little boys.

Last February, I met a man and I have fallen head over heels. He's great with my boys and wonderful to me. He has expressed that although he loves my kids, he also wants children of his own. My problem: I had a tubal ligation after my youngest was born, and now I regret it. I think this is the only thing that is preventing us from going to the next level. What should I do?

—Helpless in Washington
Dear Helpless: Call your ob-gyn and ask if the tubal ligation can be reversed. It is sometimes possible to reverse the procedure. (The same is true of a vasectomy.) If it is not possible, consult an infertility specialist.

These days, there is more than one way to skin a cat or become a mother.

Letters for this column—with your name and phone number—should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6940, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.uxpress.com/dearabby> Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GEEBI

YABBE

ENGLIT

GLOONB

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THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME BY HENRI ARNOLD AND MIKE ARGIRON

I'd like to spend the rest of my life with you

Marvin, do you mean?

WHEN THEIR CONVERSATION TURNED TO MARRIAGE SHE FOUND IT—

WHEN THEIR CONVERSATION TURNED TO MARRIAGE SHE FOUND IT—

WHEN THEIR CONVERSATION TURNED TO MARRIAGE SHE FOUND IT—

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Worried mom is dating gold digger

Dear Annie: My dad died three years ago. Six months ago, my mother met a guy while she was walking in the park. Mom is 59 and "Joe" is 13 years younger and twice divorced. At first we were happy for her, but then Joe became manipulative and controlling.

Two months ago, Joe moved in with Mom and suddenly quit his job. Joe said it was just temporary, but now he drives Mom's new Mercedes and screws her calls.

Also, she somehow never gets anyone's messages on her answering machine.

My sister and I meet Mom for lunch every two weeks, and if we say anything about Joe, she becomes very defensive. We think he is using her and has no intention of moving out of her place or getting another job. We are very worried that she might marry this man. He has proposed to her twice, but so far she's declined.

Mom owns her new house, two cars and has a very nice income

Annie's Mailbox



from Dad's retirement fund, plus a healthy portfolio from good investments made before he died.

Annie, we want Mom to be happy, but we are terribly concerned that she will marry this guy and get taken to the cleaners.

—Bad Feelings in Georgia

Dear Georgia: Your intuition sounds solid to us. You cannot prevent your mother from making a mistake if she is determined to do so.

However, since you see Mom regularly, you still have the opportunity to influence her. Say only nice things about Joe, but mention you are concerned that she doesn't respond to the messages you leave on her answering machine. You also might tell her she could allay your fears about Joe's motives if she puts her money in trust, proving that he is not interested in her fortune.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Riverside, Calif.," who

attended a bridal shower where guests addressed their own thank-you notes and were asked to bring their own stamps.

I agree that bringing your own stamp is tacky (maybe one of the bridesmaids can buy the stamps as a gift), but at my wedding shower, guests addressed their own envelopes. I cannot tell you how much easier it was for me to keep everything straight, not to mention ensure that I had the correct address and spelling. It's even a good idea for the guests to indicate who they are ("Agness Smith, Mike's aunt"). I shouldn't have to take the next two months of work to make sure everyone's thank-you note is perfect.

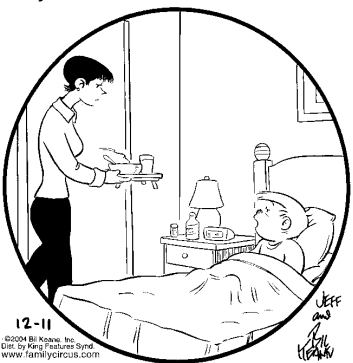
—A Bride in Endicott, N.Y.

Dear Bride: For heaven's sake, you aren't writing a novel. No one has to take two months of work to compose thank-you notes. But we agree that identifying how you are related is helpful.

Dear Bride: For heaven's sake, you aren't writing a novel. No one has to take two months of work to compose thank-you notes. But we agree that identifying how you are related is helpful.

Creators Syndicate

Family Circus



"Was the cold and flu season Congress's idea, or did you get to vote on it?"

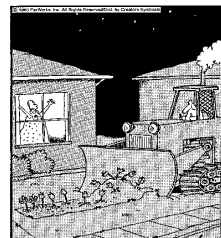


Domini the Menace



"HERE'S AN IDEA: HOW ABOUT GIVING ME MY STUFF NOW, AND SAVING YOURSELF A TRIP?"

The Far Side



Ginger decides to take out Mrs. Talbot's flower bed once and for all.

Non Sequitur



ALL THIS EATING IS MAKING ME HUNGRY. I'M GOING TO HAVE A SECOND COURSE. I'M GOING TO HAVE A SECOND COURSE. I'M GOING TO HAVE A SECOND COURSE.

McGrady's raw boosts Rockets against Spurs

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Tracy McGrady was racing down the court with the ball, his eyes focused squarely on the basket and the fate of the game in his hands.

No way he was going to settle for a tie and overtime. McGrady was thinking about making a game-winning three-pointer the whole time.

"I wanted to take my chances," McGrady said. "At that point, I felt anything I threw up was going to go in. The rim felt really, really big."

So McGrady let fly with a running three with 1.7 seconds left, capping a one-man rally in the final minute to send the Houston Rockets to an improbable 81-80 win over San Antonio on Thursday night.

McGrady scored 13 points in the final 35 seconds, including four difficult throws, to finish with 33 points, eight rebounds and five steals in a terrific clutch performance.

"It was unbelievable," said Spurs coach Gregg Popovich, shaking his head. "End of story. Guys get it."

The sleepy-eyed, 25-year-old All-Star put on a virtuoso finish that rivaled any of the top last-second efforts in the league record books.

McGrady's amazing display inevitably brought back memories of Reggie Miller's career-defining moment against the New York Knicks in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference semifinals in 1995. Miller scored eight

straight points in the final 8.9 seconds of Indiana's 107-105 win.

Rockets coach Jeff Van Gundy, an assistant coach for the Knicks then, was even stumped for a comparison to McGrady's fourth-quarter flourish.

"Sometimes when you work, you get miracles," he said.

McGrady was mobbed by teammates near midcourt, while red-and-white confetti poured from the rafters. The Spurs watched the celebration then walked off the court in stunned silence.

"I swear, I've never been a part of anything like that," McGrady said. "That was like the best feeling to me, just to have my teammates embrace me and just jumping on me like that. That was a great feeling."

Then, he smiled. "For all those fans who left the game early ... ya'll missed a great game," he said.

SuperSonics 107, Mavericks 102: At Dallas, Rashard Lewis refused to let Seattle give away a game it had dominated.

The small forward erased a fourth-quarter deficit then protected the lead with a high-flyer baseline dunk, a three-pointer as the shot clock expired and two free throws with 18.5 seconds to go.

One night after becoming the first team this season to win in San Antonio, Seattle won its fourth straight and ninth in 10 games to reclaim the NBA's best record at 17-3.

Trail Blazers 89, Celtics 87: Sha'neel Abdul-Rahim hit a buzzer-beating



Houston Rockets' Tracy McGrady, left, and San Antonio Spurs' Malik Rose battle for a rebound in the second half Thursday night.

three-pointer to lead the Trail Blazers to a dramatic victory.

Boston led 87-84 with 29.3 seconds left, but Zach Randolph made two free throws to make it a one-point game. After letting time run down, the Celtics' Gary Payton tried to get the ball in to Paul Pierce, but the shot-clock expired and led Portland with one final chance to win.

Abdur-Rahim caught an outlet pass from Derek Anderson, set up from 25 feet and drilled the winning shot.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	11	9	55.0	—
Boston	7	11	38.9	3 1/2
Philadelphia	7	11	38.9	3 1/2
Toronto	7	13	33.3	3 1/2
New Jersey	9	11	45.0	—

Central Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	13	7	65.0	—
Miami	10	6	62.5	—
Washington	4	12	25.0	3 1/2
Charlotte	4	12	25.0	3 1/2
Atlanta	3	15	16.7	3 1/2

West Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	17	6	73.9	—
Detroit	10	8	55.6	1 1/2
Indiana	10	6	62.5	—
Memphis	5	11	31.3	3 1/2
Chicago	4	13	23.8	3 1/2

Western Conference

Southwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	11	9	55.0	—
Dallas	8	12	40.0	3 1/2
Phoenix	8	12	40.0	3 1/2
Memphis	8	12	40.0	3 1/2
New Orleans	16	6	72.7	—

Northwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	13	8	61.0	—
Minnesota	12	6	66.7	—
LA Clippers	7	6	53.8	4 1/2
Portland	9	8	52.0	2 1/2
Utah	8	11	42.1	3 1/2

Pacific Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	13	8	61.0	—
Sacramento	11	7	61.0	—
LA Lakers	10	8	55.6	1 1/2
Golden State	10	8	55.6	1 1/2

Thursday's games	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston 81, San Antonio 80	17	10	62.5	—
Seattle 107, Dallas 102	18	7	72.0	—
Portland 88, Boston 87	18	7	72.0	—

Golden State	5	13	.278	10
Thursday's games				
Houston 81,	San Antonio	80		
Seattle 107,	Dallas	102		
Portland 89	Boston	87		

UMass upsets UConn Freeman's basket

BY DONNA TOMMELLE

The Associated Press

AMHERST, Mass. — Connecticut didn't have to travel far to hit its first bump in the road.

Massachusetts stunned the seventh-ranked Huskies 61-59 on Rashaun Freeman's layup with 4.3 seconds to play Thursday night, prompting many of the 9,037 fans to storm the court after the final buzzer.

"I felt like we won the national championship. I never saw a crowd like that around here," UMass guard Anthony Anderson said. "We've been saying that this was our year. Maybe we showed it tonight."

It was UConn coach Jim Calhoun's first loss to UMass in 19 years with the Huskies, the defending national champions who made the short trip up Interstate 91 for their first road game after nine at home.

"They worked us," Calhoun said. "Steve (Lappas) got his kids jacked up for the game. They played exceptionally hard. There was no reason for us to not to play hard. ... I couldn't be more disappointed."

Freeman, who had 18 points and eight rebounds, came through repeatedly to help the Minutemen (3-2) beat the Huskies (4-1) for their first time in 14 games.

"It was a gutsy win for our kids," Lappas said.

Freeman and his teammates got the better of UConn's frontcourt, which had been out-

bounding opponents by 25 boards a game. The teams finished even with 39 rebounds, but UMass had a slight edge on the glass in the first half and outscored Connecticut 42-24 inside.

"I told them at halftime we outrebounded UConn. That's unbelievable," Lappas said. "I also told them that we outscored them for a half, that's also unbelievable. Now the big challenge — we've got to win the second half."

The Huskies came back from a 12-point, first-half deficit and held a tenuous five-point lead late in the game. But Freeman hit consecutive baskets under 4 minutes left, pulling the Minutemen to 55-54.

Turnovers doomed the Huskies down the stretch. Antonio Kellogg dribbled the ball off his foot, and the Minutemen made him pay. Jeff Viggiano hit a three-pointer with 55.2 seconds left to give UMass a 57-55 lead.

"It had to be my best basket at UMass," Viggiano said. "It helps when your teammates get behind you."

After UConn's Rudy Gay hit two free throws to tie it on the next possession, the Minutemen raced upcourt on the inbounds play and Art Bowers hit Freeman in full stride for the winner. For Freeman, the buzzer came just in time.

"I had leg cramps at the end," Freeman said. "I really didn't want to go into overtime."

Gay had 13 points for UConn. Josh Boone added 12 points and led the Huskies with nine rebounds.



Connecticut's Alassane Kouyate (21) has his path to the basket blocked by Massachusetts' Rashaun Freeman in Thursday night's game.

Illinois, Kansas show why they are ranked 1-2

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Chants of "Overrated! Overrated!" followed from the Georgetown fans even before the opening whistle. Illinois needed about 14 minutes to shut them up.

After trailing for much of the first half, a rarity this season, the top-ranked Fighting Illini took control with a 14-2 run just before the break and shot 65 percent in the second half Thursday night in a 74-59 victory over the Hoyas.

"We're going to take people's shots," coach Bruce Weber said. "When you're in the top five, or one or whatever, people are going to be fired up. Our kids have got to realize that."

On a night when the Illini's outside shots weren't falling, Roger Powell exploited Georgetown's interior defense for 19 points on

Men's Top 25 Roundup

8-for-11 shooting, James Augustine added 15 points and six rebounds. Guards Luther Head and Deron Williams and Dee Brown were a combined 10-for-25, but each had at least five assists to help overcome the team's season-low five three-pointers in 15 attempts.

Illinois finished with 20 assists, just off its nation-leading 22.3 average.

"If the three are going, we're playing at home, that's great," Weber said. "But today they weren't going. We had to chill out. And I think we did a good job of that, at least enough to get a big lead."

The victory moved Illinois (8-0) two-thirds of the way to holding a No. 1 ranking for consecutive weeks for the first time in school history. The Illini lost their first game the previous two times they gained the top spot. This time, they've held their own with two victories, with a game against Oregon in Chicago on Saturday to wind up the week.

Freshman Jeff Green had 20 points and six rebounds to lead Georgetown (3-2), which had won three straight after an opening loss to Temple.

The Illini trailed for 11:20 of the first half, longer than they had in their first seven games combined (10:12). Entering the game shooting 52 percent from the field, they missed nine of their first 13 shots before dedicating themselves to working the ball inside.

No. 2 Kansas 93, TCU 74: At Lawrence, Kan., Wayne Simford had 20 points and Keith Langford added 17 for the Jayhawks (5-0), who had five players in double figures against the Horned Frogs. Walk-on Christian Moody had career highs with 10 points and 10 rebounds, and teamed with guard J.R. Giddens on the play of the night.

With 5:11 left and the Jayhawks holding a 13-point lead, Moody took the ball under the basket and fired a blind one-handed pass over his head to Giddens on the wing. Giddens then dropped in a three-pointer that brought a roar from the sellout crowd and put Kansas on top 77-61.

Nile Murry had 20 points for TCU (5-3), although he was hampered by foul problems much of the second half. Corey Santee added had 14.

Chudi Chinweze, TCU's 6-foot-7 junior, landed awkwardly on the floor with 3:08 left and appeared to hurt his left leg. Play was stopped for several minutes while he was helped into the locker room. He finished with 10 points.

Langford, the Jayhawks' best shooter lately, had nine points in the first half but went to the bench with his third foul at the 4:53 mark.

Kansas' Miles had 10 points for Kansas and Giddens, after a slow start, had 13.

The Horned Frogs, quicker than any Kansas opponent to date, had a hot hand early and led by as many as four. The Jayhawks, led by Tim Linceum and Langford, finally got untracked for an 11-0 run and coasted into half-time with a 47-37 lead.

Ohio State slaps itself with a postseason ban for violation

BY RUSTY MILLER

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio State imposed a one-year ban on Ohio State basketball by its men's basketball team in response to \$6,000 the university said former coach Jim O'Brien gave a recruit who never played for the school.

"It's too bad. It's a shame. I'm sick about it. I hate it," athletic director Andy Geiger said Thursday, calling it a major violation of NCAA bylaws.

Ohio State president Karen Holbrook said the firing of O'Brien

on June 8 was the first step in appealing NCAA investigators. She and Geiger said more penalties may be coming.

"It doesn't mean we're finished, that there's not other stuff we're looking at," Geiger said.

O'Brien, who had coached the Buckeyes for seven seasons, was fired six weeks after he spoke with Geiger about the payment.

During their conversation, Geiger said O'Brien admitted he gave \$6,000 to recruit Aleksandar Radovicic in 1999.

Radovicic never played for Ohio State. He was deemed ineligible by the NCAA before he en-

rolled because he had accepted money to play basketball in his native Yugoslavia.

O'Brien, 46-16 in his final year with the Buckeyes, has sued Ohio State for at least \$3.4 million, claiming he was fired improperly. In a statement, he hinted that there were other problems in the basketball program unrelated to what he termed a "loan" to Radovicic's mother.

"Ohio State has jumped the gun once again," O'Brien said Thursday in a statement. "I was sorry to learn that the university opted to

sacrifice the senior season of many fine young student-athletes rather than allow the NCAA to consider and evaluate all of the relevant facts."

"I believe the university is mistaken in its impression that the NCAA would sanction it on account of conduct that occurred six years ago. I believe that as the whole story comes out, it will become clear that the university took the action of today because of other conduct for which I was not responsible."

Thad Matt, hired July 7 to replace O'Brien, has led Ohio State

to a 6-2 record. He told the players of the ban in a meeting.

"The shame of it is that our players had nothing to do with it," he said. "They're being penalized for a crime they did not commit."

The ban includes NCAA and NIT bids, but the Buckeyes can still play for the Big Ten regular season and tournament titles.

Geiger said it will be easier to accept penalties now rather than waiting.

"I could be here this year, next year, the year after," he said. "We chose to do this year. Get it over with."

Harrison hopes Colts can re-sign James next

WR's extension means two of team's big three signed long-term

BY MICHAEL MAROT

The Associated Press

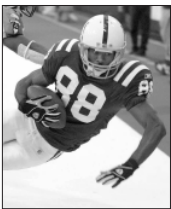
INDIANAPOLIS — One thing might make Marvin Harrison happier than having a new contract: Keeping Edgerlin James in an Indianapolis Colts uniform.

After signing Harrison to a seven-year extension on Wednesday, the Colts have two of their three triplets — Harrison and Peyton Manning — locked in for the long-term. Harrison said he hopes James joins the club soon.

"You know there's nothing like talking about Edgerlin that makes me smile," Harrison joked Thursday. "I hope they can get Edger done, too."

For now, the focus is on Harrison, who agreed to a \$66 million deal that includes \$22 million in bonuses. The contract is also cap-friendly — Harrison is expected to cost a little more than \$5 million next year against a salary cap that is expected to increase from this year's total of about \$80.6 million.

Had Harrison or James not re-signed before March, Colts President Bill Polian would have



Indianapolis Colts WR Marvin Harrison, the fastest to 800 receptions in NFL history, signed a seven-year, \$66 million extension with the team on Wednesday.

faced the toughest of choices — placing the franchise tag on Harrison, a five-time Pro Bowler, or James, a two-time NFL rushing champ.

The signing of Harrison precluded Polian from wresting with that decision. It also delighted Colts owner Jim Irsay.

"Marvin is a pro's pro," Irsay said. "He works so hard and carries himself with so much class on the field, he's helped bring the horseshoe back where it is today. He deserves it, and it puts us in a good position to move forward."

In the past nine months, Colts owner Jim Irsay has re-signed Manning and Harrison for a combined total of more than \$165 million and shelled out more than \$55 million in signing bonuses. Both are now among the highest-paid players at their positions.

Harrison holds the NFL season record for receptions (143) and reached 800 career receptions faster than any player in league history, beating Jerry Rice's pace by an astounding 23 games.

Manning could break two other NFL records this year. Dan Marino's mark for touchdown passes (48) and Steve Young's mark for passer rating (112.8). Manning has 44 TDs and a 126.3 rating with four games remaining.

Shanahan says he intends to honor Broncos contract

The Associated Press

DENVER — Trying to defuse rumors that he might be leaving soon, Broncos coach Mike Shanahan said Thursday night that he intends to honor the final four years of his contract.

Some media outlets have reported the Broncos coach could be a candidate for the vacant job at Notre Dame. Last month, Shanahan was rumored to be a candidate for the Miami Dolphins job.

Speculation about his future has increased in the past couple of days. Last Sunday, the Broncos lost their second straight game and fell to 7-5, two games out of first place in the AFC West and tied for the final AFC wild-card spot.

"As I've said all along, I have four years remaining on my contract here and I intend to honor it," Shanahan said in a statement made through Broncos spokesman Jim Saccomano.

That was a much more emphatic stance than the coach took Wednesday when, asked if he would return next year if given the chance, he essentially ignored the question and said he wanted to concentrate on Denver's upcoming game against Miami.

Broncos owner Pat Bowlen has long said Shanahan has the job as long as he wants it. This is Shanahan's 10th season with the Broncos. He has not won a playoff game since the 1999 Super Bowl, which he won with Elway's final game with the team.

FBI: Racial hate mail sent to NFL coaching late schools

CLEVELAND — A person who has sent threatening letters denouncing interracial relationships to some NFL players and other prominent black men now is targeting high school athletes, authorities said Thursday.

NFL Briefs

St. Ignatius and St. Edward, two Catholic high schools in Cleveland with well-known sports programs, received threatened letters addressed to student athletes, FBI special agent Bob Hawk said. St. Ignatius received eight letters on Nov. 30. St. Edward received two letters last week.

"The sentence structure is very similar, the paragraph structure, the verbiage structure. They're all computer generated," Hawk said. "We're convinced that it's the same letter writer."

Hawk said he only knew of schools in Ohio receiving letters.

Over the past two years, 60 such letters have been sent to at least six NFL players and other well-known black men across the nation, including civil and business leaders. None of the recipients has been identified.

The mail, postmarked from cities in northeastern Ohio and Pennsylvania, criticized interracial relationships and directed the men to end such relationships "or they're going to be castrated, shot or set on fire."

The FBI says it has no suspect and is asking anyone with information to contact the agency.

Broncos waive punter/kicker Knorr, pick up Baker

DENVER — Several weeks of lackluster punts and kickoffs cost Micah Knorr his job with the Denver Broncos on Thursday.

Knorr was waived by Knorr and signed Jason Baker, cut a day earlier by Indianapolis.

Knorr was thought to have a good leg, but he struggled Sunday in Denver's 20-17 loss to the Chargers.

NFL injury update

Injuries to prominent NFL players, followed by team's prognosis.

Seahawks WR Jerry Rice (strained left quadricus and WR Darrell Jackson (disclosed lines) listed as probable for Sunday's game at Minnesota.

Steelers WR Plaxico Burress (sore hamstring) out for Sunday's game against the New York Jets; QB Ben Roethlisberger (knee) listed as probable.

Cardinals RB Ed McCaffrey (sprained left big toe) listed as doubtful to play Sunday's game against the San Francisco 49ers.

Two punts didn't go 40 yards; one was returned to the Denver 21 and resulted in a San Diego touchdown.

The Broncos struggled with field position all day, and all four Chargers scores came off drives that began in Denver territory.

Knorr's 41.5-yard average is 12th in the AFC and his net of 34.2 is tied for 14th. He leads the league in touchbacks on kickoffs with 15, but only four of those have come in the past seven games.

Baker, a fourth-year veteran, played for Kansas City and Indianapolis this season, mainly handling kickoff duties, but also punting nine times for a 37.8-yard average.

Four finalists selected in bids for 2009 Super Bowl

NEW YORK — Atlanta, Houston, Miami and Tampa, Fla., were selected as the four finalists for the 2009 Super Bowl.

The four were recommended by a committee of owners at a meeting in Atlanta on Wednesday. One of the four will be chosen as host by the league's owners next May.

Tampa Bay's game will be played Feb. 6, 2005, in Jacksonville, Fla. The 2006 game will be in Detroit, with Miami host for the 2007 game and Phoenix in 2008.

Test: Jets one of 4 teams winless in Pittsburgh

TEST, FROM BACK PAGE

The Jets have won three in a row, but the Steelers have won 10 straight behind Roethlisberger, one short of the team-record 11-game streak set during a 12-2 season in 1975.

To keep winning, the Steelers admittedly must play much better against the league's best defensive defense than they have while scoring only 19, 16 and 17 points in their past three victories.

"We are going to have to play our best football to beat this team, I don't think there is any question about that," coach Bill Cowher said.

Roethlisberger, the rookie who has yet to lose as a starter, has presided over a virtually mistake-free offense that has relied mostly on Bettis and running back DeShaun Staley, but has shown little ability to get the ball downfield quickly without receiver Plaxico Burress, who will miss a third consecutive game with a sore hamstring.

"Hopefully, this team is [being looked at as] a team that can do a

lot of things and is a pretty dangerous team, but I think a lot of people still aren't giving us respect and that's fine with us," Roethlisberger said.

The same statement could apply to the Jets, who had consecutive low-scoring victories over the Browns (10-7) and Cardinals (13-3) before Pennington turned from a three-week shoulder injury layoff to throw two touchdown passes in a 29-7 victory over Houston.

"We're going to try to put the whole game in his [Pennington's] hands, try to take the run away as soon as possible," Steelers linebacker Joey Porter said. "I think we're at our best when we can take one dimension away from them."

"That might not be easy. Martin is having, well, a Martin-like season, with a league-high 1,305 yards, and Martin and Bettis likely will surpass the 13,000-yard career barrier Sunday, a total reached by Emmitt Smith, Walter Payton, Barry Sanders and Eric Dickerson.

With 12,974 yards, Martin fig-

ures to pass the benched-again Bettis (12,980) and move into No. 5 in career rushing on his first or second carry, though he will be tested by the NFL's No. 1 rushing defense.

Bettis' string of four consecutive 100-yard games ended when he returned to Sunday's game after being out a month with a hamstring injury.

The Jets were 1-14 against the Steelers until winning 6-0 behind Martin's 174 yards during a snowstorm Dec. 14 at Giants Stadium.

The Jets (0-4), Falcons (0-5-1), Panthers (0-2) and Buccaneers (0-2) are the only NFL teams to have never won in Pittsburgh, where the Steelers are 6-0 this season. It won't help the Jets that leading pass rusher John Abraham (9 1/2 sacks) will sit out with a sprained right knee.

"We're pretty confident," said Martin, who expects to achieve the 13,000-yard milestone in his hometown. "We have seen what we can do. We don't have anybody doubting anything we have been able to win some tough games in some tough situations."

The deadline to enter your picks for the NFL Challenge is fast approaching!

Log in every week during the 2004 NFL Season and make your picks for the winners of the upcoming NFL games. Earn points for every winning team you pick and at the end of the season, you may find yourself the winner! Use the "win code" from Monday's paper and DDB's URL to play!

Don't drop the ball!
Login to www.strikes.com or www.oconus.com

Week 14 Pick Deadline:
12 noon, U.S. Central Time
Sunday, December 12

As a BONUS PRIZE, the top winner each week will receive \$100 toward merchandise at TeamStore.com

TEAMSTORE.COM

STARS AND STRIPES
OCONUS

Players offer to cut salaries 24 percent

By IRA PODELL

The Associated Press

TORONTO — The NHL players' association stunned the league on even its members with its latest effort to save the hockey season.

When the owners walked away Thursday after the first bargaining session in three months, they had a 226-page document to go through and an offer of a 24 percent rollback of all salaries to consider.

"It was shocking for me to hear it," said Dallas forward Bill Guerin, a member of the executive board. "That's a lot of money out of a guy's pocket to be giving up."

But like the Sept. 9 bargaining session that triggered the lockout a week later, the new offer doesn't provide the cost certainty that Commissioner Gary Bettman is seeking for the 30 NHL clubs.

He noted that one aspect — presumably the rollback — was significant. But he still isn't in favor of a luxury-tax system, that players prefer, over a salary cap.

A cap is an option the union says it will never accept.

"We have said consistently that the focus must be on the overall systemic issues and the long-term needs and health of our game," Bettman said.



Bettman

5 percent salary rollback.

Another key portion of the proposal is a luxury tax, but those numbers were similar to the previous offer. If a deal is there to be made, the payroll tax would likely be the area that provides the most room for negotiation.

"I'm not sitting here saying that something couldn't be moved or adjusted, but I am saying this is the basis for an agreement, this is the basis for us to be locked-in this year," NHLPA executive director Bob Goodenow said.

Bettman said the NHL needed time to go through the offer. The sides agreed to postpone the next meeting from Friday until

Tuesday, either in New York or Toronto.

At that time, Bettman said the league will likely make a counterproposal.

Time is running short to work out a deal and still have a legitimate season. Already 382 regular-season games, plus the All-Star Game, have been canceled.

Bettman declined to announce a drop-dead date that would make the NHL the first major North American league to cancel an entire season over a labor dispute.

"When we have the deal, we'll see what we can do about having a semblance of a season," Bettman said.

After this major giveback offer, players had an even stronger resolve against a cap.

"If they want to come back with a linkage to a salary cap, then there will be no season," said Ottawa forward Daniel Alfredsson, who would stand to lose millions of a recently signed five-year deal.

The proposed luxury tax would penalize teams 20 cents for each dollar they spend between \$45 million and \$50 million. The penalty would increase to 25 percent the second year and 30 percent the third year.

Teams spending between \$50 million and \$60 million would be taxed 50 cents on the dollar the first year, 55 cents the second year and 60 cents the third. Those with

payrolls above that would have to pay 60 cents for every dollar the first year, 65 cents the second, and 70 cents the third year on each dollar over the threshold.

The NHLPA offered to change arbitration and make it more like baseball's system in which clubs and players submit figures for an arbitrator to decide on.

An entry-level contract cap of \$850,000 also was proposed, which would return the ceiling to that of the 1995 draft class. Last season, the cap on entry-level contracts was \$1,295 million.

The players' association also proposed a revenue-sharing plan to bring the bottom 15 teams within 30 percent of the revenues of the top 15 teams.

"This is no grandstand play... This is serious negotiations," Goodenow said.

Arenas have been given the go-ahead by the league to free dates previously reserved for hockey on a 45-day rolling basis. As of now, that means there won't be any games before late January.

Bettman has said that teams lost a total of more than \$1.8 billion over 10 years and that management would have to live with that without a defined relationship between revenue and salaries. Owners say teams lost \$273 million in 2002-03 and \$224 million last season.

Hamm set standard for athletes with skill and grace

HERS was the game that launched a thousand kicks, then tens of thousands, then millions, a rare blend of brute beauty and hard-nosed grace that redefined what it meant to play like a girl.

But Mia Hamm's influence didn't end there. She was the greatest athlete, she knew that every game mattered, that every time she raised the bar, everybody who played alongside or after her would have to pull that little bit extra out of themselves.

And if making teammates better is the ultimate compliment bestowed on an athlete, there can be said about Hamm and that small band of soccer players who lifted an entire sport to heights that once seemed unimaginable.

This: Under her leadership, they never, ever took a night off. "We all understand there's a bigger perspective," Hamm said Wednesday night, moments after joining longtime teammates and fellow retirees Julie Foudy and Joy Fawcett on the sidelines after a 5-0 win over Mexico. "We want to make sure this game and these girls go forward together."

Wednesday night's game in Carson, Calif., was the last in a 10-match, post-Olympics tour by the U.S. national team to mark the end of an era. The game itself was little more than a chance for the trio to take their bows on the international scene one final time in what soccer fans call a "friendly."

Typically, though, Hamm wouldn't allow the friendly part of the evening until she'd taken care of business.

After the opening 20 minutes, she set up the first two goals and saw her bid for another riotous off the crossbar. Midway through the second half, with the U.S. women already ahead 5-0, Hamm passed a teammate's pass into the goal-box and ran into Mexican goalkeeper Pamela Tajonar instead, a collision that left her clutching her knee and writhing on the turf. It wasn't until she'd hobbled around for another 15 minutes or so that Hamm finally walked off the pitch, stopping to shake hands with every player and coach on both benches.

Like all pioneers, she and the handful of others who blazed the trail for women's soccer were overachievers by nature, pushing their lives on hold and bottled up their emotions for almost 20 years on that long, difficult march to find a place to play. They never had to be told to act like ambassadors. They always knew exactly what was at stake.

"Think of it this way: Imagine that Magic, Larry Bird, Michael Jordan and Shaquille O'Neal were all on one team for 15 years."

That's what we have had with our women's national team," U.S. national team coach April Heinrichs said.

It wasn't simply the winning that made this bunch remarkable, though there was plenty of that: Hamm was named MVP in 1991 and 1999, and Olympic gold medals last summer and in 1996. It wasn't just about proving to TV, corporate sponsors and the other women of America that women athletes can draw an audience and keep it, though they accomplished that, too. It wasn't just

about opportunities for women and girls, either, though you could make the argument they could make to create those without this bit of Title IX.

It was about all of those things. And to achieve any of them, they had to prove first that they were skilled, smart and ferocious enough to compel our attention.

And at the center of it all — night after night over two decades — was that familiar, intimate bobbing just above shoulders too impossibly slim to singularly shift the attitudes of an entire nation. But Hamm never shirked her role.

"It wasn't just a game here or a game there," Foudy said. "We could always count on her."

Hamm had predecessors every bit as smart and tough as she was, though the most memorable made their mark in individual sports.

She's the first real team superstar that women's sports produced, and as such, she's undoubtedly inspired more girls to step onto a playing surface than any other female athletes combined.

It didn't hurt that Hamm was attractive, articulate and way more modest than any man who's ever achieved such a lofty status. Of course, those things will only make it tougher on anybody who would step into her shoes, which is exactly the way Hamm would have wanted it.

"Ask yourself if you could have your choice of role models, would you prefer a day with Hamm or Julie Foudy or with a famous male athlete of today?" Heinrichs said as the celebration drew to a close. "They had an impact on America's consciousness about women's sports, on women's voices."

Jim Litke is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at: jlitke@ap.org

Virginia Tech QB Randall voted ACC player of year

The Associated Press

No one asked Bryan Randall to light up scoreboards by filling the air with footballs or carrying the load on the ground.

The Virginia Tech quarterback hardly expected that of himself, either.

"I felt like it was my responsibility to be in a position to win the ballgame," Randall said. "A lot of times you can't win a game by yourself but you can lose by yourself."

By that measure, no one in the Atlantic Coast Conference had a better season than the 6-foot, 222-pound senior. Randall led the team picked sixth in the pre-season to the title in its league debut when he was named the Associated Press ACC player of the year for 2004 on Friday.

Randall received 75 of a possible 100 votes from members of the Atlantic Coast Sports Media Association. Miami quarterback Brock Berlin, who threw in a league-best 21 touchdowns, finished second with 13 votes.

Randall, the league's offensive player of the year, is the fifth quarterback in the last six seasons to win the ACC's top individual honor.

Meanwhile, Clemson linebacker Leroy Hill was named the ACC's top defensive player. Hill earned 20 votes to beat out Maryland linebacker D'Qwell Jackson (17) and Miami defensive back Antrel Rolle (13).

Randall's statistics were solid. He threw for 1,965 yards and 19 touchdowns with seven intercept-

tions, and ran for 466 yards and three scores. He ranked third in the ACC in total offense at nearly 203 yards per game.

Monty, Woods, Furry tied

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. — Colin Montgomerie was thrilled to get an invitation from Tiger Woods to play in his year-end tournament with 15 of the best players in golf. Even better was watching Woods' score.

Montgomerie hit a 5-wood into about 8 feet for eagle on the 16th hole, giving him a 4-under 67 and a share of the lead Thursday with Woods and Jim Furyk after the first round of the Target World Challenge.

"I played quite well," Montgomerie said. "Anytime you can equal Tiger Woods' week, that's OK."

Woods and Furyk didn't do anything quite so dramatic. They just kept out of trouble and avoided the kind of mistakes the knacker Chris DiMarco did of the lead twice and sent Vijay Singh to a 3-over 74, matching the worst round on a pristine day at Sherwood Country Club.

Utah State hires Guy

LOGAN, Utah — Brent Guy was hired to coach Utah State Friday after spending the last four seasons as an assistant with Arizona State.

Guy, a former Utah State assistant from 1992-94, was defensive coordinator and linebackers coach for the Sun Devils.

He replaces Mick Dennelly, who was fired after posting a 19-37 record in the last five years.

Big money laid out for big bats

On eve of winter meetings, Dodgers sign Kent and D-Backs grab Glaus

BY RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Before the baseball world gathered in California for the winter meetings, Arizona snapped up third baseman Troy Glaus and Los Angeles added second baseman Jeff Kent in a pair of big-money deals involving All-Stars.

Glaus, the 2002 World Series MVP for Anaheim, agreed Thursday to a \$45 million, four-year contract with the last-place Diamondbacks.

Baseball roundup

Los Angeles didn't even wait for the formal start of the meetings to hold the first news conference at the hotel where baseball officials will gather in Anaheim, traveling south to announce a \$17 million, two-year contract with Kent, who helped Houston come within a game of its first NL pennant.

In other deals Thursday: ■ The Chicago White Sox agreed to a \$10.15 million, two-year contract with outfielder Jermaine Dye.

■ San Diego agreed to a \$1 million, one-year deal with outfielder Eric Young.

■ First baseman Julio Franco, 46, stayed with the Atlanta Braves for a \$1 million, one-year deal.

Plenty of big names are likely to be bandied about on the trade market when baseball officials gather for their annual weekend of business and gossip.

During last year's meetings in New Orleans, there were 13 trades, eight deals with free agents who agreed to major league contracts and six more contracts with free agents that were agreed to but not announced.

Randy Johnson, Sammy Sosa, Mike Piazza, Kevin Brown, Barry Zito, Tim Lincecum and Shawn Green have been mentioned in trade talk, but there's been no indication that their teams are ready to finalize any deals.

Most of the biggest names among free agents have held off agreeing to contracts, among them pitcher Pedro Martinez, Derek Lowe, Carl Pavano, Russ Ortiz, Eric Milton and Kevin Millwood, first baseman Carlos Delgado and Richie Sexson; third baseman Adrian Beltre, outfielders Carlos Beltran and Magglio Ordonez; and catcher Jason Varitek.

Fifty-four of the 207 free agents have agreed to contracts thus far, five fewer than on the eve of last year's meetings.

Glaus, slowed by a shoulder injury the past two seasons, is being counted on by Arizona to fill the void left by Sexson.

"He's a cornerstone player," general manager Joe Garagiola Jr. said of Glaus. "What he brings is one of the issues we felt we needed to address. Now we've done that and I'm confident in saying there will be more to come."

Glaus, 28, hit .284 with an AL-leading 47 home runs in 2000, followed by 41 homers in 2001 and 30 in the Angels' World Series championship season of 2002. In Anaheim's seven-game World Series triumph over San Francisco, he hit .385 with three home runs and eight RBIs.

The three-time All-Star played in only 91 games in 2003 because of the shoulder problems, then appeared in 29 games last season before arthroscopic surgery. Glaus returned in late August, and hit seven of his 18 home runs in the final month of the season to help the Angels to the division title.

"It's healed. It's fixed," Glaus said. "Now it's just a matter of



Jeff Kent ended a scoreless dual in the 10th inning of Game 5 of the NL championship series with this three-run homer for the Houston Astros.

time in the throwing program and things like that and I'll be ready for spring without any doubt."

His deal includes a signing bonus of \$4 million and annual salaries of \$8 million, \$9 million, \$10.5 million and \$12.5 million. The contract also provides Glaus a hotel suite on road trips and up to \$250,000 reimbursement per year for personal business expenses.

Arizona went 51-111 last season just three years after winning the World Series. The Diamondbacks tied for the 10th-most losses in major league history.

Kent, 26, hit .289 with 27 homers and 107 RBIs last season and made the NL All-Star team for the fourth time. The 2000 NL MVP has a .289 career average with 302 homers and 1,207 RBIs in 13 seasons.

"My parents did not know about this," Kent said, choking back tears, along with his parents. "I grew up with my dad taking me to Dodger games. This

might be my last turn, so I'm very happy to be a part of the organization."

The highlight of his 2004 season was a three-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning of Game 5 of the NL championship series. Houston went on to lose the next two games in St. Louis.

"Adding Jeff Kent to our lineup not only gives us another major offensive force, but it provides me with flexibility in the field," manager Jim Tracy said.

Dye will replace Ordonez as the starting right fielder with the White Sox. Dye rebounded from an injury-plagued year to hit .265 with 23 homers and 80 RBIs in 137 games with Oakland last season — despite playing almost a month with a fractured thumb.

"I'm not going to try and fill any role," Dye said when asked about replacing Ordonez. "I'm just going to play hard and hope it's enough to get this team to the playoffs."

Kent not shocked by Bonds' testimony

The Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Jeff Kent isn't shocked that San Francisco slugger Barry Bonds is the focus of baseball's steroid scandal.

"I can't get into specifics, but in general, I'm not surprised," Kent said when asked what he thought about Bonds' acknowledging, during grand jury testimony last year, that he used a substance he didn't know contained steroids.

"It's embarrassing that we've come to this point, where we have grand jury testimony coming out as evidence against some players," added Kent, Bonds' teammate for six seasons with the Giants.

"I think we all know that there was a problem, but I think we were all hesitant because we didn't know the real truth about the issue at hand — the steroid issue."

Kent made his remarks Thursday after a press conference during which his free-agent signing with the Los Angeles Dodgers was announced.

Bonds' testimony last year in the investigation of a steroid-distribution ring was leaked to the San Francisco Chronicle. The story came out one day after New York Yankees slugger Jason Giambi's testimony to that same grand jury in 2003, which was reported by the Chronicle.

Kent believes the steroid scandal is dragging baseball down.

"It's sad to see that there are still accusations and investigations. The integrity of the game has been hurt by this, and it's embarrassing to me as a player," said Kent, the 2000 NL MVP whose 278 career home runs are the most by a second baseman in big league history.

Every major league player was tested once in 2004 during a period between the start of spring training and the end of the regular season. In 2003, anonymous tests were conducted as a survey, and 5 percent to 7 percent came back positive.

"It's embarrassing to baseball," Kent said. "We addressed it with the bargaining agreement a few years back. We needed to do something to it at that time, and obviously, I don't think we did a good enough job to fix it. Now, all of a sudden, we're back to where we were then, so there's a need to do more."

Arizona Sen. John McCain last week threatened to propose federal legislation that would override the drug-testing provisions in baseball's collective bargaining agreement. The players union then gave its lawyers the OK to reach an agreement with the owners on tougher testing for steroids.

"This has been going on too long," Kent said. "They didn't fix it right the first time, and I'm hoping they fix it right this time. It's sad to see that some families are really in a bind because of the game because the guys are cheating."

Bradley loses appeal of jail sentence

The Associated Press

CUYAHOGA FALLS, Ohio — The Ohio Supreme Court rejected former Cleveland Indians outfielder Milton Bradley's appeal of a three-day jail sentence he received for driving away from police who were trying to give him a speeding ticket.

Bradley, who now plays for the Los Angeles Dodgers, pleaded guilty earlier this year to a charge of obstructing official business, a second-degree misdemeanor, in the August 2003 incident. He was sentenced to three days in jail and 40 hours' community service and fined \$250.

Bradley's lawyer appealed the



Briefs

sentence, saying the offense did not merit jail time and would hurt Bradley professionally.

A new sentencing hearing was scheduled for Wednesday in Cuyahoga Falls Municipal Court. The Supreme Court rejected hearing the appeal on Dec. 1.

Bradley's lawyer did not return a message seeking comment Friday.

The outfielder faces a Feb. 22 trial in Cuyahoga Falls Municipal Court on a misdemeanor count of disorderly conduct stemming from a Nov. 25 arrest for interfer-

ing with someone else's traffic stop. Bradley, 26, has asked for a jury trial. If convicted, he could face 30 days in jail or a \$250 fine.

Bradley was suspended for five games in late September by Major League Baseball for slamming a plastic bottle into the front row at Dodger Stadium after a fan had thrown it onto the field.

Red Sox to carry World Series trophy to Maine

PORTLAND, Maine — The Boston Red Sox will bring their World Series trophy to Maine next week, and the team's representatives are going to cover much more ground than originally envisioned.

Gov. John Baldacci announced Thursday that the Red Sox will visit Portland on Friday, Dec. 17. The following day the trophy will be taken on a road trip with stops in Presque Isle, Bangor and Augusta. The Red Sox were originally scheduled to come to Portland on Nov. 3, but the visit was postponed due to a scheduling conflict.

"It will be the largest rally Portland has ever seen," predicted Portland's marketing and communications manager, Liz Darling.

She helped plan the New England Patriots Super Bowl rally last April, which drew an estimated 45,000.

"We're anticipating this to be larger," she said.

Report: Irish interested in Pats' Weis

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Count Charlie Weis among the coaching candidates at Notre Dame.

The New England Patriots offensive coordinator could be interviewed by the Irish as early as Friday, The Boston Globe reported on its Web site Thursday night.

The report is "nothing that we would comment on," Patriots spokesman Stacey James said.

Notre Dame is looking for a replacement for fired coach Tyrone Willingham. School officials also are scheduled to meet with former Irish assistant coach Tom Clements on Friday, a football source told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Clements, in his first season as offensive coordinator with the Buffalo Bills, played quarterback for the Irish under coach Ara Parseghian, leading the

school to an undefeated season and a national championship in 1973.

The Globe attributed its report on Tuesday to an unidentified source involved in the hiring process at Notre Dame and a source in the NFL with ties to Weis.

Weis' agent, Bob LaMonte, told the AP early Thursday that he had not heard from Notre Dame, saying he thought the school was focusing on Clements. LaMonte did not immediately return another call seeking comment.

Weis did not immediately return a phone message.

John Heiser, Notre Dame's associate athletic director, said Thursday the university would not comment.

Weis attended Notre Dame, but never played college football. He was hired an assistant at South Carolina from 1985-88 and joined the New York Giants as a defensive assistant and assistant special teams coach in 1990. He has also been an assistant with Patriots and Jets before becoming offensive coordinator in New England in 2000.

Study: Less than half of players at 27 of 56 bowl schools graduate

By MIKE SCHNEIDER

The Associated Press Writer

ORLANDO, Fla. — Twenty-seven of the 56 schools with bowl-bound football teams graduated less than half their players, according to a study released Tuesday.

The annual study by the Institute of Diversity and Ethics in Sports at the University of Central Florida also showed that 39 of the schools graduated less than half of their black players.

Among the bowl teams, 51 of 55 graduated at least 40 percent of their white players, according to the study, while just 30 schools graduated at least 40 percent of their black players. Only six schools graduated a higher percentage of black players than white players.

There are 56 teams playing in this year's bowl games, but only 55 teams were examined because Navy doesn't release graduation rates. Last year, 32

bowl-bound teams graduated less than half of their football players.

"You find the gaps between African-American and white football players a little bit wider at the bowl level," said Richard Lapchick, the study's author. "It's a problem throughout Division I-A."

The institute used NCAA statistics for the study. The statistics were taken from four freshman classes, beginning in 1994-95 and ending in '97-98, with each class given six years to graduate.

This year, the NCAA reported that 54 percent of all football players graduated, an increase of 3 percent over last year. The general student body rate was 60 percent and the overall student-athlete rate was 62 percent.

The schools with the worst graduation rates, both overall and for black players, were Pittsburgh and Texas. Pittsburgh had an overall graduation rate of

31 percent and 20 percent for black players. Texas had an overall graduation rate of 34 percent, 33 percent for its black players.

Texas spokesman Bill Little said the study did not take into account the many football players left and graduated at other schools after coach Mack Brown took over the program in 1998.

"When you change coaches, there are guys who don't want to play in that system," Little said. Pitt spokesman E.J. Borghetti said the report doesn't reflect the school's current graduation rate since 15 of 19 seniors on the team graduated last year, including eight of 11 black players.

"It's key to emphasize the report is a snapshot of a football program in the middle of the last decade," Borghetti said. "It's not an accurate portrait of what our football program is in 2004."

Syracuse (78 percent overall, 69 for black players), Notre Dame (78 and 74) and Boston College (77 and 76) had the best graduation rates overall and for black players.

Cooper defends decision to hire Spurrier

By JACOB JORDAN

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — The only black football coach currently at South Carolina defended the school's decision to hire Steve Spurrier after the Black Coaches Association criticized the university for failing to conduct a full search.

Assistant Ron Cooper, a former head coach at several Division I-A schools, said Thursday he was contacted about the position when Lou Holtz decided to retire earlier this year.

But when athletic director Mike McGee told Cooper there was a chance to hire Spurrier, Cooper said, "if you can hire Steve Spurrier, go hire him now."

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist," Cooper said. "There are a lot of coaches out there that would have said what I said."

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist."

There are a lot of coaches out there that would have said what I said."

Ron Cooper

South Carolina assistant coach on hiring Steve Spurrier

BCA director Floyd Keith told prospective football recruits and assistant coaches to stay away from South Carolina because the school ignored the group's recommendation for a more open coaching search.

Keith said earlier this week that South Carolina never contacted the BCA.

"There was an announcement

and a hire," he said. "That was so fast that a jackrabbit couldn't have had a family between all that."

Cooper, a former head coach at Eastern Michigan, Louisville and Alabama A&M, said he was out of town this week when the news broke.

"I know Floyd and I understand where he's coming from," Cooper said. But "to say that it was never brought up, it was brought up and it was talked about."

Three of the five black head coaches at major colleges — Notre Dame's Tyrone Willingham, New Mexico State's Tony Samuel and San Jose State's Fitz Hill — won't be back with their schools next season.

McGee has said the mission of the BCA is important to college football. But he said administrators need a brief time frame to land someone as prominent as Spurrier.



Heisman Trophy candidates, from left to right, Matt Leinart, of USC; Reggie Bush, of USC; Alex Smith, of Utah; Jason White, of Oklahoma, and Adrian Peterson, of Oklahoma, pose before the start of the Home Depot College Football Awards on Thursday in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

White takes Maxwell, O'Brien

The Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Oklahoma quarterback Jason White was a two-time award winner in college football, taking the Maxwell Award as best all-around player and adding his second straight Davey O'Brien quarterback trophy.

Texas running back Cedric Benson won the Doak Walker Award on Thursday night.

White, last year's Heisman Trophy winner, also is a finalist for this year's Heisman to be presented Saturday night in New York.

White had 30 touchdowns passes and just four interceptions in leading the Sooners (12-0) to the national title against Southern California in the Orange Bowl on Jan. 4. He beat out teammate Adrian Peterson and Southern California quarterback Matt Leinart for the Maxwell, and topped Leinart and Utah quarterback Alex Smith for the Davey O'Brien Award.

"I'm really very surprised about this, especially after the way our season ended last year," White said, referring to losses in the final two games of the '03 season. "Everybody seemed to really write me off as far as the awards and everything for this year."

"This is certainly a great honor. But you know in the grand scheme of things, it really doesn't mean very much unless we're able to win it all. I'd rather be on the best team in the nation than to be the best overall player in the nation."

Leinart didn't leave the awards ceremony empty-handed — he was chosen Walter Camp player of the year. Also a Heisman finalist, Leinart has the top-ranked Trojans (12-0) in position to win a second straight national title. He has thrown for 2,748 yards and 28 touchdowns.

"I'm really just kind of going into this [Heisman] with an open mind, but I'm going in by not getting my hopes up, either," Leinart said. "I'm just looking forward to the whole experience in New York City and hanging out with ev-

erybody and all of those past winners. It's going to be an honor, and we'll see what happens. I'm just going into it looking to have fun."

The Maxwell Award once was a good predictor of the Heisman with 14 of 19 players earning both awards from 1961-99. But the last four Maxwell winners fell short in winning the Heisman, college football's top individual prize.

"In all honesty, I think that string will probably reach five," White said. "I'm not sure about my chances for the Heisman." Benson's honor signified him as the nation's top runner, having gained 1,764 yards and scoring 20 touchdowns. He beat out Peterson, the Awardees' sensational freshman, and California's J.J. Arington, for the award sponsored by the Southern Methodist Athletic Union.

"With those guys (Oklahoma) being undefeated and in the national championship game, I'm a little bit surprised," Benson said. "It seems like the undefeated teams always get all the awards. I'm just really honored and glad my name was mentioned, and that my hard work wasn't overlooked."

Georgia defensive end David Pollack won the Chuck Bednarik Trophy as the nation's best defensive player. On Wednesday, the 6-foot-3, 261-pound Pollack won the Lombardi Award as the nation's top lineman.

White wasn't the only award winner from Oklahoma. Offensive tackle Jammal Brown took the Outland Trophy as the nation's best interior lineman.

Also, Michigan's Braylon Edwards took the Bilezikian Award for best wide receiver; Auburn's Carlos Rogers won the Jim Thorpe Award for best defensive back; Ohio State's Mike Nugent won the Lou Groza Award for best kicker; and Baylor's David Sepulveda took the Ray Guy Award for best punter.

Utah's Urban Meyer, who took over at Florida earlier this week, was chosen The Home Depot coach of the year.

A freshman who's ahead of the class

Oklahoma's Peterson lives up to the hype

By JEFF LATZKE

The Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — Adrian Peterson's arrival at Oklahoma was accompanied by impossible expectations. Before he even stepped on a practice field, he was hailed as one of the nation's best runners who would carry the Sooners to greatness.

Then, in just one season, he proved it wasn't so impossible after all. Now, the 19-year-old running back will try to become the first player to win the Heisman Trophy as a freshman. No sophomore has won it, either.

He's one of five finalists, joining Sooners quarterback Jason White, Utah quarterback Alex Smith and Southern California teammates Matt Leinart and Reggie Bush. The award will be presented Saturday.

Peterson has rushed for 1,843 yards and 15 touchdowns. He's had at least 100 yards rushing in 11 games — an NCAA freshman record — and is only 20 yards from breaking the NCAA's season rushing record for freshmen, set by Wisconsin's Ron Dayne in 1996.

But Dayne, whose Badgers were 8-5 that year, didn't even break the top 10 in the Heisman voting. The last freshman to make it to the top five was Virginia Tech's Michael Vick, third in 1999.

Not even Maurice Clarett, who rushed for 1,190 yards and 16 touchdowns as he helped Ohio State win the 2002 national championship, found his way into the top 10.

Peterson, though, has run right past Clarett's numbers. And he hasn't made the typical freshman mistakes. He hasn't lost a fumble all season despite leading the nation with 314 carries, helping the No. 2 Sooners (12-0) to an Orange Bowl berth

against No. 1 Southern California (12-0) for the national championship.

Along the way, Peterson shrugged off the records and the attention. He's not on a mission. He's just doing what he does best.

"I really don't feel like I have to prove anything to anybody," he said. "I just got out there and run the ball."

Teammates no longer view him as a liability in pass blocking — his lone weakness at the start of the season — and White said he's comfortable with Peterson protecting him. White has even said he'd

cast his Heisman vote — as a past winner — for Peterson.

"Adrian brings a lot to the team," White said. "Just his presence being out there, the defense has got to be ready for him."

Colorado coach Gary Barnett, whose team was routed 42-3 by the Sooners in the Big 12 title game, viewed Oklahoma's last year as a one-dimensional, pass-only team the Buffaloes

could blitz mercilessly.

"The reason we could do that is because they didn't have Adrian Peterson at that time," Barnett said. "Adrian Peterson takes you out of that mode. He makes you become a really sound, fundamental, basic football team. If you are taking any chances, they better be thought out. That's what he does to you."

One of Barnett's cornerbacks, Terrence Wheatley, said that after facing Peterson: "I have never seen a guy that big, that strong, that fast."

Tackle Jammal Brown, one of three seniors on Oklahoma's offensive line who would vote for Peterson for the Heisman if he could.

"He's the real deal," Brown said. "He makes plays on his own. We block well for him, but a lot of times the things he does are all him. He'll make the first guys miss and he'll outrun the last guy."

"He's the future and will take Oklahoma a long ways in the next four years."

Peterson has taken them far this year. With White struggling against Texas (113 yards, no touchdowns, two interceptions), it was Peterson who lifted the Sooners with 225 rushing yards to outshine Texas tailback Cedric Benson.

He ran for 249 yards to help Oklahoma edge Oklahoma State 38-35. After a shoulder injury limited his carries against Nebraska, he returned to score three touchdowns each against Baylor and Colorado to bolster his Heisman credentials.

Stoops has refused to pick sides in the Heisman race, but he'll be the first to praise Peterson. When asked what makes the 6-foot-2, 210-pound freshman so successful, Stoops rolled out the superlatives.

"It's his strength, it's his speed, it's his vision, it's his toughness when he takes somebody on," Stoops said. "He's got it all."

But will it be enough to beat two undefeated senior quarterbacks?

History says it won't. But it wouldn't be the first time Peterson has done something few thought he could.



AP
Adrian Peterson has rushed for 1,843 yards and 15 touchdowns.

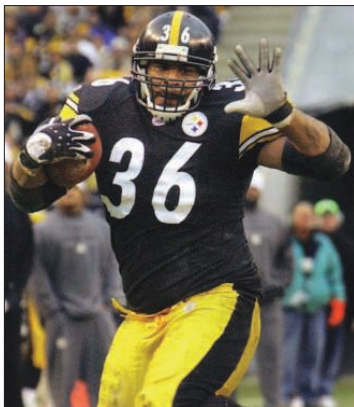
College football schedule/statistics

Playoffs			Wednesday, Dec. 29 Houston Bowl			Division I-A team statistics			Total defense			Div. I-A individual statistics		
Division I-A Semifinals			Texas-El Paso (9-3) vs. Colorado (7-5)			Total offense			Plays			Rushing		
Friday, Dec. 10			At Alamo Bowl			Plays			Yds			Yds		
James Madison (11-2) at William & Mary (11-2)			San Antonio (11-2) at Oklahoma State (7-4)			Louisville			North Carolina St.			Thomas, Mo. Texas		
Saturday, Dec. 11			At San Antonio			Boise St.			LSU			Arington, Cal.		
San Houston St. (11-2) at Montana (11-2)			Continental Tire Bowl			Utah			Virginia Tech			Williams, Memphis		
Division II Championship			Bristol College (11-2) vs. No. Carolina (6-5)			California			Florida St.			Wolfe, No. Illinois		
At Florence, Ala.			At San Francisco			Texas Tech			Wisconsin			Peterson, Oklahoma		
Pittsburg St. (14-0) vs. No. Carolina St. (12-1)			New Mexico (7-4) vs. Navy (9-2)			Oklahoma			Iowa			Morency, Okla.		
Division III Semifinals			At San Diego			Memphis			Penn St.			Hall, So. Florida		
Saturday, Dec. 11			California (11-2) vs. Texas Tech (7-4)			Purdue			Georgia			Wright, Mo. Texas		
Many Hardin-Baylor (12-1) at Mount Union, Ohio (12-0)			Silicon Valley Classic			Troy			California			Seymour, C. Michigan		
Rowan, N.J. (10-2) at Linfield, Ore. (11-0)			KIAA Sports Center			Northern Illinois			Georgia Tech			Herron, N. Carolina		
Saturday, Dec. 18			Troy (7-4) vs. Northern Illinois (9-3)			Southern California			Virginia			Dorsey, UNLV		
At Hardin County, Tenn.			At Nashville, Tenn.											
St. Francis, Ind. (13-0) vs. Carroll, Mo. (11-2)			Alabama (6-5) vs. Minnesota (6-5)											
Bowl schedule			Rushing offense			Rushing defense			Passing					
Tuesday, Dec. 14			Yds			Yds			Yds			Yds		
New Orleans Bowl			Purdue (4-9) vs. Arizona State (9-3)			Rice			Florida St.			LeFlore, Louisville		
North Texas (7-5) vs. Southern Miss. (6-5)			Boise State (11-2) at Memphis, Tenn.			Texas			California			Smith, Utah		
Tuesday, Dec. 21			Championship game			Air Force			Oklahoma			Campbell, Auburn		
Georgia Tech (9-5) vs. Marshall (7-4)			At Peach Bowl			Minnesota			Troy			Jacobs, Bow. Green		
Wednesday, Dec. 22			At Dallas			Miami (6-3) vs. Florida (7-4)			New Mexico			White, Oklahoma		
GMAC Bowl			At Dallas			Cotton Bowl			Nebraska			Wright, Mo. Texas		
Thursday, Dec. 23			Memphis (8-5) vs. Bowling Green (8-5)			Tennessee (9-3) vs. Texas A&M (7-4)			Tulsa			O'Driscoll, Purdue		
Fort Worth (Texas) Bowl			Cincinnati (9-5) vs. Marshall (7-4)			At Tampa, Fla.			Texas Tech			Reid, Tulane		
Las Vegas Bowl			Wisconsin (9-2) vs. Marshall (7-4)			At Dallas			Northern Illinois			Flowers, Louisville St.		
Wyoming (6-6) vs. Hawaii (7-5)			At Alamo Bowl			Florida State (8-5) vs. Jacksonville (7-4)			Marshall			Lick, Tulane		
Friday, Dec. 24			Capital One Bowl			At Orlando, Fla.						Pierce, N. Mexico St.		
UAB (7-5) vs. Hawaii (7-5)			Houston Bowl			At Pasadena, Calif.								
Monday, Dec. 27			MPC Computers Bowl			Michigan (9-2) vs. LSU (9-2)								
Tuesday, Dec. 28			Fresno State (8-5) vs. Virginia (8-5)			At Tampa, Fla.								
Wednesday, Dec. 29			Toledo (9-5) vs. Connecticut (7-4)			At Pontiac, Mich.								
Thursday, Dec. 30			Independence Bowl			At Shreveport, La.								
Friday, Dec. 31			Iowa State (6-5) vs. Miami (OH) (8-4)			At Phoenix								
Saturday, Jan. 1			Oregon State (6-5) vs. Notre Dame (6-5)											

SPORTS



Players offer to cut salaries by 24 percent in latest effort to end lockout, Page 28



Pittsburgh Steelers' Jerome Bettis needs 20 yards Sunday to reach 13,000 career rushing yards, a total reached by only four NFL backs.



New York Jets' Curtis Martin, who leads the league with 1,305 yards this season, can also reach 13,000 career yards with 26 on Sunday.

A test of endurance

Steelers-Jets matchup could determine better prospect for long run in playoffs

BY ALAN ROBINSON

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — This game may not define or validate a season — no, the Jets and Steelers seem long past that. The mere presence of soon-to-be 13,000-yard rushers Curtis Martin and Jerome Bettis could make Sunday a special occasion, but then the very teams themselves ensure that.

Reputations won't necessarily be made, either. Martin and Bettis were certifiable stars years ago, and quarterbacks Chad Pennington and Ben Roethlisberger may soon be in their upper-echelon class, too. Neither defense needs another sack or long shut-out streak to authenticate its rigidity, neither offense must produce another 100-yard rusher to prove its longshoreman-like commitment to toughness.

What this mid-December game between two similar, championship-worthy teams may decide



is which has the strength and resilience to still be playing in early February.

The Jets, whose 9-3 record has been matched by only three teams in franchise history, begin a difficult four-game closing stretch that could propel them into the playoffs on a remarkable roll — or, conversely, leave them too depleted to play beyond early next month.

Coach Herm Edwards' team owns a two-game lead in the AFC wild-card race that it wants to

maintain to gain more favorable matchups in playoffs. But it won't be easy, not with the Seahawks (6-6), Patriots (11-1) and Rams (6-6) still to play.

The Steelers (11-1), their own record equaled in franchise history only by one of the greatest teams ever to play the sport, are all but assured of a division championship — but, beyond that, little else. With the defending Super Bowl champion Patriots matching them victory for victory, one slipup could cost them the potentially decisive home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs.

To both teams, the choice is simple: win Sunday, or possibly be forced to win a much more difficult game in January. "This is a playoff-style game that will prepare both teams for the playoffs," Pennington said. "We both have a lot at stake. We are trying to solidify a wild-card spot and they are trying to protect home-field advantage. It is important to both teams."

SEE TEST TO PAGE 27

Colts wide receiver Harrison signs seven-year, \$66 million contract extension, Page 27



Sooners freshman Peterson outran hype to become Heisman finalist

Page 31



Oklahoma QB White picks up hardware on way to Heisman dinner

Page 30

Week 14
playoff
scenarios



AFC EAST
New England can clinch division title with:

1) A win and N.Y. Jets loss
New England can clinch playoff berth with:

1) A win or tie, OR
2) Baltimore loss or tie, OR
3) Denver loss or tie, OR
New York Jets can clinch playoff berth with:

1) A win + Buffalo loss or tie + Denver loss + San Diego win or tie
OR
2) Baltimore loss or tie + Denver loss + Baltimore win or tie

AFC NORTH
Pittsburgh can clinch division title with:

1) A win or tie, OR
2) Baltimore loss or tie
Pittsburgh can clinch playoff berth with:

1) Denver loss or tie
AFC SOUTH
Indianapolis can clinch division title with:

1) A win, OR
2) A tie and a Jacksonville loss or tie
NFC EAST
Philadelphia has clinched division title.

Philadelphia can clinch first-round bye with:

1) A win or tie, OR
2) Green Bay loss or tie, OR
3) Atlanta win or tie

NFC SOUTH
Atlanta can clinch division title with:

1) A win or tie, OR
2) Tampa Bay loss or tie and a Carolina loss or tie
Cleveland, Miami and San Francisco have been eliminated from playoff contention.



Hustling UMass stuns No. 7 Connecticut

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Rockets' McGrady takes off in final seconds against Spurs Page 25